Chapter IV

CONCEPT OF EDUCATION

Nettleship observes, "Nature and nurture are the two things which go to make up human character. Neither will do without the other; you cannot create the required nature but you can by nurture do everything short of that; and without the proper nurture the best nature is as likely to run out ill, as to turn out well." A close reflection will show that the acquisition of knowledge is not supposed to overshadow the fundamental human values. Man's understanding of the universe and himself should go a long way to the development of body, mind and the spirit. Unless these faculties can be nurtured properly, no good can come out of him. In the west, so long the acquisition of information helps men to contribute unanimously his creative activities in the field of art, culture, science and literature. Even in the medieval period of European history such concepts of education ruled supreme giving more stress on the study of Latin, Greek, logic, mathematics, geometry, astronomy and music.

Education as acquisition of knowledge has not lost its value even today. But the modern educationists of both the east and the west hold this as onesided, since it does not

1. R.L. Nettleship, Lectures on the Republic of Plato, p. 77
manifest the whole man hidden in them. A child should be educated in the most natural way to grow and develop its inborn qualities as the guiding factors in education. Says, Lecomte du Nouy, in his famous book, 'Human-destiny'. "Man must be made to understand that the mechanical transformation he has introduced in his environment and his adaptation to them will mean either progress or ruin according to whether or not they are accompanied by a correlative improvement in his moral attitude."² Again he says, "If humanity makes this effort it will contribute to the advent of the superior conscience preparatory to the pure and spiritual race destined to appear one day."³

In fact knowledge or information by itself is not education, unless it is accompanied by the basic human values - moral and spiritual. This is where there has been steep deterioration qualitatively. The International committee on the development of education in its report 'Learning to Be' (1972) states, "Serious anomalies appear where the educational system has been set up only recently, and copied from foreign models - usually in the case of developing countries."⁴ Undoubtedly this formal, imitative process of education brings about utter chaos and confusion. Most of the educators

². Lecomte du Nouy, Human Destiny, p. 102
³. Ibid., p. 103
⁴. UNESCO, Learning to Be, p. XIX
identify quality of education with the mastery in knowledge or the achievement aspect of education. But like everything of the universe that requires preparation before it is utilised, man too requires development of his highest faculty spiritual conscience, or values. And since values stand for intrinsic worth, what kind of values are most worth noting?

To be true, the gamut of values may be broadly divided into two types - the eternal and the temporal. Unlike the temporal values that attach ourselves to the material world, eternal moral and spiritual values take us out of ourselves, inspiring us to be good and to do good to others. It is a process involving personal becoming. Education is thus concerned with the immost nature of the person educated, and not with those things external to him. Not all processes involving human development are education. It is only those processes which guide, direct or fashion personal becoming. Education requires an educative agent, acting upon the person to be educated. This rules out a view of education as a process of unfolding, as the emergence of personal becoming.

Modern world is now aware of this relevant fact that education picks out processes by means of which people start on the road to such achievement. R.S. Peters writes, "Education in other words refers to no particular process, rather it encapsulates criteria to which any one of a family of processes must conform. In this respect it is rather like a 'reform'.
'Reform' picks out no particular processes. People can be reformed, perhaps by preventive detention, by reading the Bible, or by the devotion of a loving wife. Peters is confident that the achievement must be that of the learner in the end. The teacher's success can only be defined in terms of that of the learner. This presumably is the logical truth dormant in the saying that all education is self education. Furthermore, in his concept of education Peters asserts that the word education has normative implication. "It implies that something worthwhile is being or has been intentionally transmitted in a morally acceptable manner. All that is implied is a commitment to what is taught valuable." So far as Peters' definition of education is concerned we find that it is accurate but uninformative. It provides no substantive guide lines. Rather it leaves unanswered two vital questions - what are the worthwhile things which are to be transmitted? Whether a manner of transformation is morally acceptable or not? Perhaps we shall yet answer if we turn our attention away from the concept of education and concentrate on the concept of 'educated man'. "All we need to do is to establish what an educated person is and we shall have the hints and clues we want at least as far as the first question is concerned."

5. R.S. Peters, The Concept of Education, p. 1
6. Ibid., p. 10
No doubt, education has to do with human beings and not with plants and animals. It is not a thing which a person possesses. Knowledge, skill or good character are not in themselves education but only evidence that one has been educated. As Phenix observes, "Education is not a thing, it is a process, a kind of activity in relation to human beings. To educate is to engage in a process, and to have an education is to be someone who has undergone process." Indeed this process aspect of education is accepted by Peters also who like Rousseau believes that the guiding of the process is taken over by man himself. This does not in any way hinder the usual passage from 'cosmic evolution' to 'human education'.

Previous to Rousseau the child was modelled on the pattern of his seniors. Rousseau for the first time introduced child-centric tendency in education. "The psychological tendency in education comes from Rousseau as the direct outcome of the Naturalistic Movement deriving all its educational theories from the nature of the child, but it is best known as the Pestalozzian Movement." In fact from eighteenth century onwards we find this tendency as what Pestalozzi calls child-centred education. The greatness of Pestalozzi lies in that while Rousseau was mainly a theorist who could hardly make a practical application of all his educational principles,

8. P.H. Phenix, Philosophies of Education, p. 11
Festalozzi started schools for children where he carried on experiments in educational theories and practices. In his famous book 'Emile' Rousseau revolutionised the old concept of subject-centred education and made the child the centre of discussion in modern education. To him, education is the natural development of the child's innate powers and abilities, instincts and impulses from within and not a coercion from outside. The child should be allowed ample freedom to have direct experience of things. For Rousseau, the state of nature is the ideal state, and so in education he disapproved interference with nature. Rousseau was one with Plato, the ancient Greek teacher that the function of education was to preserve the child's goodness and purity but without strain from the external world. As to the role of the teacher Rousseau opined that every teacher was a learner who had to study the minds of young pupils to protect and guide them in a proper way.

Rousseau's philosophy of education is a curious blend of both naturalism and idealism. As P.T. Nunn observes, "A careful analysis of Rousseau's use of the term nature would reveal that his philosophical position though apparently naturalistic was was essentially idealistic." In fact Rousseau was idealistic in so far he opposed nature 'not to spirit but to social convention'. His naturalistic education holds that up to the twelve years a child's education is only

10. P.T. Nunn, Education Its Data and First Principles, p. 17
a preparation for moral, aesthetic and religious training. This process continues till he becomes a man. Plato also believed in such process aspect, where his main object was to turn the eye which the soul possessed towards light. The principle which Plato conveyed by this metaphor was that the whole function of education was not to put knowledge into the soul, but to bring out the best things that were latent in the soul, and to do so by directing it to the right objects. How is this to be done? "It was Plato's belief, indeed, that no philosophical truth could be communicated in writing at all; it was only by some sort of immediate contact that one soul could kindle the flame in another."¹¹ Therefore the role of the teacher is immensely important in his concept of education. Again, according to Plato the soul naturally assimilates itself to its surroundings. It is most forcibly put in the Republic, where he represented the human soul as a living organism, and said, "Just as a plant when sown in the ground develops according to the soil and the atmosphere it lives in, so it is with the soul."¹²

In the view of Plato, since soul grows, the problem of education is to give it the right surroundings. The soul adapts itself to its environment, and it is all-important what the environment is. Nevertheless, Plato believed that

¹¹. John Burnet, Greek Philosophy, p. 1
¹². Plato, Republic, Book VI, p. 401
life the main instruments for bringing out what was best in
the soul were, first literature, beginning with stories for
children and going on to poetry, secondly music in the sense
of playing and singing and thirdly the plastic arts. He "began"
gymnastic in common practices. His incessant saying was -
'gymnastic for the body and music for the soul'. Up to the
age of 18, emphasis was laid on both physical and mental
training. From 18 to 20, there was to be an inclusive train-
ing in gymnastic and military exercises calculated to de
ever courage, self-control, character and discipline. But at the
age of 20, men without good intellectual capacity would drop
off from the list as a result of public test. Mathematics,
astronomy, logic and the development of dialectic power were
included in the test. This test would last for 5 years. At
35, they would occupy positions of authority in the state. So
quote from Plato, "Until philosophers are kings and princes
of the world have the spirit and power of philosophy ... 
cities will never have rest from their evils."13

A philosopher king like an ideal teacher, must know
the purpose of all beings and doings. He is the embodiment
of divine wisdom, goodness and truth. Plato's concept of
education is in many ways remarkable. It is partly utilitarian
and partly ideal, extending to after life. As Burnet observes,
"We must not teach the children anything elaborate or

13. Ibid., p. 435
professional, but only simple physical drill with simple songs, taking as our model what is required in war and the service of the god."  

The greatest thing a man can learn is to see according to a man's measure the presence of reason and divine intelligence in the world about him. So from its earliest stages education is a process of helping the soul to see the good. So far as Plato's theory of education is concerned, if we think that aristocracy is the best kind of society, we might agree that Plato's educational concept is best for us. But vehement protest was raised by Rousseau against Plato's static concept of education. He abhorred the very idea of instruction and imposition. To him, the child was to grow according to the process of his own nature under natural environment. Both Rousseau and Plato were conservative in respect of women's education. While Plato believed that in the field of administration and public service there was no difference between men and women, his plea was for women of the guardian class only. Similarly, women's education, according to Rousseau, consisted in training in domestic science, needle work, cooking etc.

A voice is often raised by some critics that Plato's concept of education is anti-democratic, because it is meant for the upper classes, not for the traders and the slaves. But a close analysis will show that he selected candidates for higher stages of education according to the democratic method.

14. John Burnet, Greek Philosophy, p. 250
of tests, character, intelligence and experience. This is equality of opportunity which is no doubt the essence of democracy. Rousseau's view of education is democratic, since he wants men first before they are lawyers, soldiers or divines. Thus while traditional thinkers believed that human nature was evil and must be reformed, Rousseau asserts that human nature is good and should be allowed free growth, development and discipline.

When we go through the educational view of Pestalozzi, we are convinced that traces of Rousseauistic influence are as prominent on Pestalozzi as on many other reformers of education. To him, education is both a social as well as an individual process. Education consists in right thinking and right living of the individual both for his own good and for the good of the society. To quote from K.K. Mukherjee, "He not only wanted to psychologise education but also socialise it so as to make it the chief means of social reform." Pestalozzi is naturalistic in his view when he regards education as the development of the latent powers and capacities of the individual. As the tree grows according to its own nature, so also the man. Herbert Spencer is much more alive to the importance of early naturalistic growth and development. To him, education as a preparation for complete living is limited only by the rights of others to enjoy the same freedom. As Castle writes,

15. K.K. Mukherjee, Some Great Educators of the World, p. 66
"Spencer is the first English writer on education to proclaim unequivocally the rights as distinct from the needs of boys and girls."16

John Dewey regards education as a dynamic, continuous and lifelong process which requires constant reorganisation and integration of experiences and activities. Such activity-oriented education passes through three stages. In the first stage the child starts his activity in an unregulated manner, not knowing what it is about. In the second stage, by constant activity the mind gradually grasps the meaning, so that the activity becomes purposeful. In the third stage both activity and experience imparts mind the proper direction and power of control. By and large the mind at that stage can combine old activities and experiences in new patterns to meet the new situation. Emphasising the need of education Dewey says, "what nutrition and reproduction are to physiological life, education is to social life . . . . Every social arrangement is educative in effect, the educative effect first becomes an important part of the purpose of the association in operation with the association of the older with the younger."17

Unlike the authoritative views where experience is regarded as knowledge by itself, Dewey believes in knowledge

16. E.B. Castle, Educating the Good Man, p. 95
17. John Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 9
as intercourse of living beings with its physical and social environment. Man tries to adjust himself to his environment and this results in his growth. To him, education is the laboratory in which philosophic distinctions become concrete and are tested. And the function of school consists in coordinating within the discomposition of each individual diverse influences of the various social environments in which he enters. Nevertheless such purposeful and co-operative activities carried on in a free and happy environment are conducive to good discipline, which cannot be imposed on the child by any external authority. Rather the child imposes it upon himself voluntarily through participation in co-operative activities in the school society. This participation enables the child to imbibe virtues like tolerance, mutual respect, sympathy and service to humanity. In his famous book 'Human nature and conduct', Dewey writes, "We must work on the environment, not merely on the hearts of man." The moral upliftment of the individual cannot be brought about merely by preaching and exhortations, objective conditions are to be changed. And the role of a teacher consists in helping like a guide who puts his pupils in the position of a discoverer and experimenter.

Dewey's concept of education is dynamic as well as comprehensive. He believes in democratic social order which

is considered essential for the healthy growth of individuals. To quote from his words, "Such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder." Nevertheless Dewey's educational philosophy has tremendous influence not only upon the entire field of education but upon social thinking all over the world. "He is the sponsor and forerunner of the movement known as 'progressive education' which is one of the most significant trends in modern education." In fact Dewey's philosophy can be best interpreted in terms of democracy, freedom, experience or education. In the same manner Whitehead points out the necessity of "keeping knowledge alive, or preventing it from becoming inert, which is the central problem of all education." In his view, a heavy syllabus cannot guarantee the transmission of knowledge rather the knowledge imparted to the student ought to be understood and digested by him. Whitehead sees the test of truth in its practical value. Life as viewed by him is "essentially periodic." It has divergent aspects, each playing an appropriate role. Accepting mental growth of different periods of life Whitehead devises a suitable pattern of education that can facilitate the intellectual and

20. K.K. Mukherjee, Some Great Educators of the World, p. 154
22. Ibid., p. 27
psychological growth of the individual. The successive stages are - "the stage of romance, the stage of precision, and the stage of generalisation." 23

Whithead's educational view is broad and comprehensive. He has emphasised in the field of knowledge the growth of specialisation in every field. For idea of unity underlying every branch of knowledge must be inculcated in the minds of the individual. As a strong admirer of democratic ideal of equality Whithead believes in individual differences too. The student should not be "compressed arbitrarily within the confines of one standard educational strait-jacket." 24 Nevertheless, education as conceived by Whithead is creative. It accompanies and stimulates the growth of culture in the student. And for this reason free movement of ideas as pre-requisite for all new discoveries and inventions is mostly needed.

It is evident that the old traditional view did not recognise the importance of the psychological process involved in education. It is Rousseau who first drew our attention to the difference in aptitude of children. Gradually the educationists are awakened to the fact that the 'being to be educated', must be studied first. Henceforth education has been psychological.

23. Ibid., p. 28
24. A.H. Johnson, Whithead's Philosophy of Civilisation, p. 119
But no tentative and provisional theories of psychology can build a coherent concept of education. Aldous Huxley rightly remarks, "Along with the necessary knowledge and skill must be given the will to use them, even under the pressure of incessant temptation ... Mostly, people will not wish to resist these temptations unless they have a coherent philosophy of life, which makes it reasonable and right for them to do so, and unless they know some technique by means of which they can be sure of giving practical effect to their good intentions."²⁵

If we study the statement carefully, we find that western psychology is not an infallible guide for the training of the mind which is what education means. It is wellnigh impossible to arrive at any truth in the midst of medley of thought. As Swami Vivekananda says, "The idea of psychology in the west is very much degraded."²⁶ The study of psychology in the west does not help us in securing freedom from the tentacles of our senses. But Indian psychology, says Vivekananda, "teaches us to hold in check the wild gyrations of the mind, place it under the control of the will, and thus free ourselves from its tyrannous mandates. Psychology is, therefore, that science of sciences, without which all sciences and all other knowledge are worthless."²⁷

²⁵. Aldous Huxley, Ends and Means, p. 247
²⁶. C.W.S., vol. VI, p. 28
²⁷. Ibid., p. 30
In fact Swami Vivekananda's approach to psychology is based on the systems of Sankhya, Yoga and Vedanta. On the basis of these he focused the search-light of his master mind and reinterpreted the theories in terms of modern science. In his view, "consciousness is a mere film between two oceans, the sub-conscious and the super-conscious." If a time when Freud had hardly formulated his theory of the unconscious, Vivekananda had clearly and unmistakably spoken not only about the conscious or the sub-conscious but the super-conscious also. In western psychology there is no conception of the super-conscious. Only recently have the para-psychologists headed by Dr. Rhine and others have come to admit the existence of Extra-Sensory Perception (E.S.P.).

With firm faith in Indian psychology Vivekananda says, "The great task is to revive the wholesman, as it were, in order to make him the complete master of himself. Even what we call automatic action of the organs within our bodies, such as liver, etc. can be made to obey our commands." Vivekananda talked of the necessity of bringing the mind under control. So he did not stop with mere control of the unconscious. "Just as unconscious work is beneath consciousness, so there is another work which is above consciousness. When this super-

28. Ibid., vol. VIII, p. 276
29. See Alexis Carrel, Man the Unknown, p. 100
conscious state is reached, man becomes free and divine, death becomes immortality, weakness becomes infinite power, and iron bondage becomes liberty. That is the goal, the infinite realm of the superconscious. So any theory of education unless it is based on total conception of man as a whole, education is bound to be lop-sided, giving rise to complicated problems both individual and collective. The case for philosophy of education stands on the hope that such a basis cures education from the curse of lop-sidedness. In evolving a philosophy of education one has to clarify three major points as guidelines which are more or less constructive as well as creative in its effect.

(1) What is the real conception of the teacher? What are the qualities which a teacher should have? Who is an ideal teacher?

(2) What is the image of a true disciple? What are the rules and disciplines he has to undergo?

(3) What is the nature of the educative process by which the ideal teacher transforms the true disciple in the image of his own self?

These three major dimensions of a philosophy of education may be exhibited thus -

31. Ibid.
The modern western educationists also believe that the child's brain is a highly delicate organ and hence requires very careful handling. But Vivekananda has gone deep into the very structure of the mind and suggests means of controlling it for the attainment of real knowledge.

Modern man plays the tragic role of inner poverty in the context of external affluence. The remedy for this individual and social distortion lies in the continuation of man's evolution beyond the organic level into the spiritual level. There is a science of this higher evolution. And this forms, or ought to form, according to Vivekananda, the central core of any meaningful education in the case of a being so high in the scale of evolution as man. It is only then that the very meaningful concept of education for a complete man, of education to be and not merely education to do will become fruitful. Learning to do and learning to do are two inseparable aspects of any education designed to help the human child.
to achieve life fulfilment. Modern education has so far concentrated only on the learning to do aspect. But learning to do, if carried too far without a corresponding stress on learning to be, will cause distortions in the human psyche and in the social situation. The nature and content of all learning to be depends on insight into the nature of man and his possibilities. A materialistic philosophy which sees man only as a product of physical forces and as a seeker of organic satisfactions touches man only on the surface and fails to comprehend the spiritual dimension beyond. True education, then, is one in which science and religion combine.

Education to Vivekananda is a misnomer, unless it trains the will of man. All knowledge the world has ever received comes from the will of man and all discoveries are the result of the activity of the will. Education alone can bring to light the wonderful capacities of the human mind which is a part of the universal mind. The external teacher offers only the suggestion and the rest is to be worked out by the internal mind within. This is the real spirit of the educational process. The modern world has ignored the fundamental aspiration of man to realise his best self. Man's faith is destroyed; he is deprived of his dignity as a moral being and is controlled chiefly by material forces. Vivekananda was profound in his idealistic position as against the immense flush of materialism. The love of man stimulated him to raise
the dignity of man by educating in natural environment and giving him freedom to think, act and will properly. His main mission was "to preach unto mankind their divinity and how to make it manifest in every moment of life." The sages and seers of India long ago discovered and expounded the ideals of a total and complete life for every human being. The attainment of all-round prosperity (abhyudaya) and the realization of the supreme felicity (nihsreyasa) are to be combined to perfect without conflict or confusion of life values. The air of Indian civilization has been to lead man to the Highest Truth without overlooking the organic cravings and limitations that the body and mind are heir to, and which can be sublimated without harm.

In conformity with the Indian tradition and culture, Vivekananda highlighted education "as the manifestation of perfection already in man." Since the human mind is perfect in itself there is no necessity for it to receive knowledge from outside. A simple rearrangement of previous impressions in the mind would lead to new propositions and theories as happened in the cases of Sir Isaac Newton who discovered the law of gravitation. In his words, the law of gravitation is already there in Newton's mind. "The time came and he found

33. C.W.S., vol. IV, p. 358
it out."\(^{34}\) It means that whatever a man learns is really what he discovers or unveils. As he says, "All knowledge, all powers are within. All knowledge comes from the human soul. Man 'manifests knowledge', 'discovers it within himself', which is pre-existing through eternity.\(^ {35}\) Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind, suggestion is the friction which brings it out. Vivekananda is profound in his point that in many cases knowledge is not 'discovered' but remains 'covered', and when the covering is being taken off, man learns and the advancement of the knowledge is made by this process of uncovering. Just as an Oak tree is natural to the acorn, so is knowledge to the human mind. Its manifestation is only a question of being conscious of it.

Like most of the western educators - Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Dewey, Peters and others, Vivekananda believes that all education means self-education. "No one can teach anybody. The teacher spoils everything by thinking that he is teaching."\(^ {36}\) The off-quoted maxim of Vivekananda that no one can teach anybody is perfectly true, though it appears to be paradoxical. As he says, "You cannot teach a child anything more than you can grow a plant. All you can do is on the negative side - you can only help. You can take away the obstacles, but

\(^{34}\) Ibid., vol. I, p. 28  
\(^{35}\) Ibid., vol. I, p. 28  
\(^{36}\) Ibid., vol. V, p. 366
knowledge comes out of its own nature. Loosen the soil a little, so that it may come out easily. Put a hedge round it, see that it is not killed by anything, and there your work stops. You cannot do anything else. The rest is a manifestation from within its own nature."37

By education Vivekananda does not mean formal schooling alone. This is clear when he says, "If education were identical with information, the libraries will be the greatest houses in the world and encyclopedias the rishis."38 In his view education divorced from life and confined within the four walls the classroom becomes artificial and loses its value. Child's education should not be confined to schools. It must comprehend the whole world where he can develop himself fully in natural surroundings. Criticising the prevailing system of education, where no positive ideas were given to the student Vivekananda says, "The present system is only to make a host and clerks, post-masters and telegraph operators and so on. As a result education for boys and girls is neglected."39

What Vivekananda aims at is education for life as opposed to education for profession. An education that has such a limited objective and a purely utilitarian aim is sure

37. Ibid., vol. I, p. 28
38. Ibid., vol. III, p. 302
39. Ibid., vol. VIII, p. 70
to stultify itself. Or the other hand education for life must be necessarily broad and comprehensive, in character. To quote his words, "you call a man as educated if only he can pass some examinations and deliver good lectures. The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy and the courage of a lion - is it worth the name?"  

In fact such practical insight into education was found in Vedic India, where four disciplinary stages of life - Brahmacharya, grihastha, vanaprastha and sannyasa were strictly observed. Chastity in thought words and deeds always and in all conditions constitutes what is called Brahmacharya. "Every boy", declares Vivekananda, "should be trained to practise absolute Brahmacharya and then sraddha, faith will come."  

In ancient times the period of studentship, up to twelve years of the Brahmachari, received prime importance, for the foundation of life was to be laid in that period. As a subject of study along with the classes, both religion and metaphysics instilled in his mind the desire to solve his life's problems. Those who opted for higher education studied Arthasastra or the science of wealth and Dhamasastra or the science of religion. Education consists in subordinating the life of the

40. Ibid., vol. VII, p. 147
41. Ibid., vol. V, p. 369
wealth by the science of religion.

After the studentship a young man might enter into second stage of a grihastha or householder. Then serving his worldly duty he could enter into the life of a forest hermit. In this stage of vanaprastha he separated himself from all worldly ties. Renunciation is the ultimate stage of life. Shat at successive stages all the four asramas worked out, the whole life of a man was looked upon as an education. Such life long and continuous system of education was significant, for it divided life on realistic grounds confining each stage to one important function of life. Allowing growth of specialisation in every field, the idea of unity was inculcated in the minds of the students. Mahatma Gandhi was impressed by this system of ancient India and he said, "Due to such a system of education, Indian civilization had outlived so many vicissitudes." The object of education at that time was to give men the unity of truth.

Paying highest tribute to the unique system of Vedic India Vivekananda observes, "My idea of education is personal contact with the teacher 'gurugrihayasa'. Without the personal life of the teacher there would be no education, for it is the personality of man that really runs through us." The ultimate

42. The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi, vol. 13, p. 310
43. C.W.S., vol. V, p. 224
object of attainment is the personality, the conscious principle of oneness. Vivekananda has a great admiration for gurukula system of Vedic India, for moral and religious education can never be given through books alone but more through the practical life of the teacher. In Upanisadic period the pupils received instruction from teachers who were religious figures or sannyasins, under their guidance the student was taught Vedas, Upanisads, literature, science of health, mathematics and others. Above all Vivekananda laid much emphasis upon the personal life of the teacher. In his words, "One should live from his very boyhood with one whose character is like a blazing fire and should have before him a living example of the highest teaching. ... . The charge of imparting knowledge should again fall upon the shoulders of tyagis." Here Vivekananda means to say that only ideal teacher can make ideal student. Real education implies on intimate relation between the teacher and the student.

The Indian scriptures lay down some rules for the conduct of both teacher and the students. The virtue necessary for the taught are purity, a real thirst for knowledge and perseverance. Without faith, humility, submission and veneration towards the teacher, there is no real education. The students or pupils are subjected to a rigid discipline and obligation towards their teacher. As such the period of

44. Ibid., p. 370
45. Svetasvatara Upanisad, IV, 10.1
studentship or Brahmacharya is mostly significant. Reverence, health, merit, energy and intelligence can be easily achieved by one who observes strict Brahmacharya, or self-restrained life.

Vivekananda says, "Every pupil should be trained to practise absolute Brahmacharya." As a Brahmachari, one can master a lesson in a very short time, since a chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will power. This is evident in the Chandogya Upanisad, where Svetaketu studied all the Vedas within twelve years, which differ from the later regulation of twelve years for each Veda. The Bhagavad gita enumerates the duties of the Brahmachari - "The student must practise self-control and study the scriptures along with other branches of learning. He should observe strict continence, never departing from it. He must learn to offer his heart's worship to the Divine self in all beings and to see the one god residing in all."48

In conformity to the ancient ideal, Vivekananda has described vividly the conditions that are necessary for success as a pupil and as a teacher. At first, the pupil must have purity of thought, speech and action. Secondly, he must have a real thirst for knowledge. Unless this felt need is there,

46. C.W.S., vol. V, p. 369
47. Chandogya Upanisad, IV.10.1.
48. Swami Prosvananda, Bhagvad gita, p. 176
all the other conditions of teaching will be of no avail.

Thirdly, there should be perseverance in their effort to learning, which is pre-condition for success.

As to the qualifications of the teacher, it is probably to be assumed that since a teacher is always a student, he must have all the characteristics of the student mentioned above. In fact the function of the teacher is neither communication of information nor stimulation of the intellect; it is a matter of influencing the pupil so that he can be transformed. Real guru is indispensable in the educational thought of Vivekananda. The study of scruti, scriptures, works of authority cannot give the delivering knowledge. The Chandogya Upanisad says, "Only by knowledge received direct from the guru does one attain to the most beneficial." It is irrelevant to say that the teacher should have perfect mastery over the aims, objectives and goals along which the learner has to traverse. "In the vast majority of cases", says Vivekananda, "such help is absolutely necessary. When it comes, the higher powers and possibilities of the soul are quickened. Spiritual life is awakened, growth is animated and man becomes holy and perfect in the end." Where to find such a helper? "It is a mysterious law of nature" continues the Swami that "as soon as the soul earnestly desires to have religion, the transmitter of the religious force must and does appear to

49. Chandogya Upanisad, IV.4.3.
help that soul.  

One of the peculiar features of ancient system of education was that the teacher used to take students without charge, and not only so, most of them gave their students food and clothes.  

Appreciating such model, Vivekananda says, "The teacher must not teach with any ulterior selfish motive, for money, name or fame." His works must be simply out of love, out of pure love for his disciples. In his view a real teacher should be dedicated. His personal life should be pure and stainless. Laxity may be tolerated in other professions but unpardonable in teaching. Vivekananda is very much clear in his opinion that educational process is a bilateral affair, an interaction between the teacher and the taught. A sense of discipline is the first requisite demanded both of them. Here Vivekananda makes a significant contribution. In his view in this process we not only influence others but are influenced by others also. This interaction is something which goes on incessantly and which is the most important thing in the teacher-student relationship.

What Vivekananda thoughtmost can be said in one word-strength. It is strength - physical, mental, moral and spiritual that can bestow faith on himself and others. To quote his

50. Quoted A.V. Athalye, Swami Vivekananda, pp. 61-62
51. See Chandogya Upanisad, IV.4.2.
52. C.W.S., vol. IV, p. 162
words - "If the fisherman thinks that he is the spirit, he will be a better fisherman; if the student thinks that he is the spirit, he will be better student. If the lawyer thinks that he is the spirit, he will be a better lawyer." Vivekananda's approach of life and education is hopeful and inspiring. Such positive and constructive outlook of life can help one and all. With firm conviction Vivekananda opines that such an uplifting, giving message of Vedanta cannot be taught fully with the class-room lectures alone, rather fundamentals of religion can only be given through conduct, discipline and dedicated work. One must have the strength of the spirit, the ability, the self-confidence and fearlessness arising from faith in our divine nature, if we are to face and master the external obstacles of the nature. And master them we must, if we are to help ourselves and serve others. In 'Discovery of India' Jawaharlal Nehru writes, "Vivekananda spoke of many things but the one constant refrain of his speech and writing was abhay - be fearless, be strong ... . If there is a sin in the world, it is weakness; avoid all weakness, weakness is sin, weakness is death."54

Vivekananda regards religion as the innermost core of education. In his view, since divinity and perfection are one and the same there can be no antithesis between them.

54. Jawaharlal Nehru, Discovery of India, pp. 339-36
Nevertheless, education and religion have the same root in assimilation of ideas in the light of personal experience. To him, the entire psychology of education in India is based on Yoga and Advaita. If Advaita is the principle, religion is the medium and Yoga the proper way.

Vivekananda's advent into the arena of life, education and religion was a historical necessity. His plan for the regeneration of India consisted in removing poverty and unemployment by educating the masses so that their lost individuality could be restored. He realised this pertinent fact that the quality of education was measured by the quality of the masses and not by the microscopic few belonging to the class. And the first requisite for bringing about a physical, mental and spiritual regeneration of masses was Sraddha. To quote his words, "Faith, faith and faith in ourselves, faith in God — this is the secret of greatness ... . Therefore to preach the Advaita aspect of the Vedanta is necessary to rouse up the hearts of men, to show them the glory of their souls."

It is very significant that even in the last decade of the nineteenth century when people were enamoured of the prevalent system of education, Vivekananda could detect its underlying defects and that his observations were in close accord with those made by the Mudaliar Commission at a much later date.

55. C.W.S., vol. III, p. 190
date. In fact, Vivekananda was not concerned with pedantry as such, yet education as a national problem always occupied his thought. He felt in those days the ill-effects of the foreign language which denationalised the people of India. This is clear from his own utterance—"Getting by heart the thoughts of others in a foreign language and stuffing your brain with them and taking some university degrees you consider yourself educated?" Blind imitation does not stimulate national growth in a man, unless one loves one's mother country and mother language. Rooted in tradition and own culture education makes one humane by refinement of heart and spirit. Love, strength and courage are necessary. The urge to action, will to act, will to sacrifice are equally necessary. For Vivekananda, work and sacrifice are the two corner stones of his message.

The modern education all over the world has lost much of its connection with the values of human life. As such the students have no faith in themselves. In the view of Vivekananda both religion and morality must get supreme consideration in education as they would change inner life and bring strength of character in the growing generation. It is Yoga based on a system of psychology very well applied in ancient India, that goes a long way to control over the senses.

To Vivekananda, the essence of religious education is to deliver us from bondage and sufferings of the world. What

56. C...C., vol. III, p. 182
constitutes bondage? It is the sense of 'I' and 'mine', selfishness. Selfishness is bondage, unselfishness or love is freedom and peace. To make oneself free from the shackles of 'egoism' is the beginning and end of all knowledge. It is the doorway to perfection.

Here is a revolutionary process and a creed in the field of religion as much as in the realm of social reconstruction. If we fall short of living up to the great Advaitic truth as Vivekananda taught it - the truth that human beings the world over are one, that all are manifestations of the same Divinity - we shall not be able to solve the problems of the present age.

To Vivekananda, the main problem in the process of self-manifestation, is the removal of obstacles in the form of selfishness and vices. Ethical life is the removal of these obstacles but is not in itself religion. When the obstacles are removed, Divinity manifests itself more and more and this divine life is true religion. The innate divinity of man is the constant theme of all his teachings. He wanted to tune all aspects of our life to this ultimate spiritual goal. Only then human society nationally and internationally shall find its desired goal of peace, progress and fulfilment - free from narrowness, superstition and jealousy.

The International Commission on the development of Education in its report 'Learning to Be' (1972) states that
"future of our societies lies in democracy, development and change; our societies must train men for democracy, humanistic development and change." 57 Democracy is an ethical way of life as it advocates treating of others as one would treat oneself. Education being the dynamic instrument of social change fosters ability to co-operate with others among individuals and communities. Radhakrishnan asserts the same idea when he says, "The importance of education is not only in knowledge and skill but it is to help us to live with others." 58 In the language of the Education Commission (1966), "the national system of education is the only instrument that can reach all the people." 59 No doubt it is a sure and tried instrument which has dedicated work and sacrifice. The spirit of self-sacrifice and the sense of sincere service on the part of the members of the society have made the social organisation well-founded and thus enabled it to last for centuries unhampered. "Swami Vivekananda who even today strides like a colossus across the whole region of modern Indian history and culture, touched both the individual and the social life at every possible angle, and his impact can be felt palpably." 60

57. UNESCO, Learning to Be, p. 101
58. S. Radhakrishnan, The Present Crisis of Faith, p. 146
59. Report of the Education Commission, p. 4
60. R.C. Mazumder (ed.) in Introduction to Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Volume, Calcutta, 1963
In the global context, the scenes of discord and conflict must be replaced by concord and amity if mankind is to survive. Man can be saved from the mire of a materialistic outlook only if he is shown the way to acquire spiritual strength by manifesting his divine nature. The path leading to this goal lies through hard discipline but the goal should never be lost sight of. The Upanisads, which saw all knowledge as one, presented education as man's search for knowledge in both the fields of para vidya and para vidya. The first gives knowledge, while the second matures that knowledge into wisdom. Without this maturity into wisdom, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow. As Vivekananda says, "Education is not the amount of information that is put into the brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life ... . We must have life-building, man-making, character-building assimilation of ideas."  