"The most potent of all indirect influences in the development of our citizenry is the influence of a good teacher".  
- Gerson

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(1) **Necessity of a teacher:**

In the light of the discussion in the previous chapters it has been made clear that Education should aim at: (i) Self-realization; (ii) The preparation of the individual for life; (iii) Development of all potentialities of the individual; (iv) Making of a complete man; (v) Seeing the unity in diversity; and (vi) Freedom from the petty differences and prejudices. All these aims are not contradictory, but complementary. In fact, all the aims are included in the first aim, namely, the self-realisation.

What are the means to achieve these aims? Should it be pupil-centred, or teacher-centred or subject-centred? Gita says that all the three aspects of education, namely, pupil, teacher and the instruction are equally important. Neither of them must be over-emphasized. Education, according to Gita, consists in the co-operation of both the teacher and the pupil in order to gain the knowledge of the Supreme, and to practise it in the every day life, for the spiritual uplift of the individual and for the good of the society. So a right education implies a right instruction by a right teacher to a right pupil through right methods. All these aspects of education have been perfectly blended in the Gita. Sri Krishna is an ideal teacher and Arjuna is an ideal pupil.
Speaking about the need of a Guru, Swami Vivekananda says:

"Every soul is destined to be perfect, and every being, in the end, will attain the state of perfection. Whatever we are now is the result of our acts and thoughts in the past; and whatever we shall be in the future will be the result of what we think and do now. But this, the shaping of our own destinies, does not preclude our receiving help from outside; say, in the vast majority of cases such help is absolutely necessary. When it comes, the higher powers and possibilities of soul are quickened, growth is animated, spiritual life is awakened, and man becomes holy and perfect in the end.

"This quickening impulses can not be deriving from books. The soul can only receive impulses from another soul, and from nothing else -- To quicken the spirit, the impulse must come from another soul. The person from whose soul such impulse comes is called the Guru -- the teacher; and the person to whose soul the impulse is conveyed is called the Sishya -- the student. To convey such an impulse to any soul, in the first place, the soul from which it proceeds must possess the power of transmitting it, as it were, to another, and in the second place, the soul to which it is transmitted must be fit to receive it. The seed must be a living seed, and the field must be readily ploughed, and when both these conditions are fulfilled, a wonderful growth of genuine religion takes place". "The true preacher of religion has to be of wonderful capabilities, and clever shall his hearer be". --

-- and when both of these are really wonderful and extra-ordinary, then will a splendid spiritual awakening result, and not otherwise. Such alone are the real teachers, and such alone are also the real students, the real aspirants".1


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(2) **Qualities of Pupils**

Just as a plant has to be nourished well during its infancy in order to grow sturdily into a tree, to blossom and to fruition well, the human being endowed with more faculties than a tree requires more careful and planned nourishments in the first stage of his life only in order to live well, develop all the aspects of his personality and to make use of these developed faculties for the benefit of the society. The ancient Rishis of India recognised the first stage of life as the most important one and prescribed many types of training to make him a complete man. Whether he likes it or not, man has to pass through the successive stages of infancy, childhood, youth, adulthood and old age. During the infancy i.e., from the time he is born to the age of five or six, the human being lives mostly in the company of his parents for his physical protection and affection. Whatever the experiences that he gets here will be the basis for further development.

The period from six years to eighteen years of age, when he enters the second stage of his life, is very important for gaining the knowledge, for acquiring skill in some profession and for building the character. This stage is called 'Brahma-Charya'. In order to attach his mind to the study of the reality he has to detach his mind and senses from the sensual pleasures. Hence this stage is aptly called 'Brahmacharya'. In this formative period of life only, care has to be taken to build the moral and intellectual tissues not merely by formal instruction, but also by a way of life.
The Brahmacharin has to lead a life of unbroken continence, inculcate the utmost simplicity and humility in his life by living on the barest necessities and has to devote himself unreservedly to the acquisition of true knowledge. This is a period of apprenticeship for a human being to fulfil his duties as a member of the household, a good provider and protector of his children, a contributor to the social good and at the same time to make his life worthy and to uplift himself spiritually. In fact this is a period wherein the preparation for his life takes place.

The qualities that make a true Brahmacharin or a student are purity in thought, speech and action, a real thirst after knowledge and a spirit of perseverance. The spirit of enquiry with a sincere purpose of knowing is essential for every student. The knowledge has to be acquired through prostration, enquiry and service to the teacher. This is an attitude of total surrender to the teacher. The humility of Arjuna is revealed in his admitting that he does not know what to do and requesting Krishna to teach him. 'I am your disciple, teach me what is good for me'. When the pupil approaches the teacher in this attitude, we can understand that he is a real seeker. This is not blind submissiveness or

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- तत्राविद्यं प्रश्नितात्मनः परिश्रमः केम् ॥ (४-१४)
- यशोः स्वामिनिः श्रीमाने श्रीमानेषु शास्त्रे यद्वा प्रगतिः ॥ (३-६)
hypocrisy in order to gain some material benefit. This surrender shows the absence of egoism in the pupil. Egoism always brings selfishness and subjectivism. Hence the pupil has to surrender his will to the teacher and prepare himself as a sincere student. Surrender does not mean passive listening to the teacher. He must also have the spirit of enquiry.

All the Indian Sastras prescribe some qualities both for the pupil and the teacher. The time, place and the material instruments used are only secondary. What is more important are the attitudes of the pupil and the teacher and their amicable relationship. A pupil must have an acute memory (Medha). The faculty of memory is not merely memorising the passages and books, as it is generally thought by modern psychologists, but it is the capacity of the student to reach intensively with an experience at the time of its occurrence, so that later on automatically without any effort it springs forth with the level of memorised experience. The pupil has to make the ideas and words explained by the teacher his own at the very time of listening to them.

A pupil must have a fairly good amount of general knowledge of the world outside. This quality is known as 'Vidvath'. A pupil must have 'Uhapohavichakshana' or the argumentative spirit of enquiry and understanding. Another quality is 'Viveka' or capacity to discriminate between real and unreal. This capacity of discrimination brings in him 'Vairagya', which means the avoidance of the unreal and false and not the running away from responsibilities as it is generally supposed to mean.
Some other qualities which are essential for a seeker of the Truth are Sama, Mumukshutva, Dama, Uparati, Titiksha, Sraddha and Samadhana. Sama means the calmness of mind. It is the characteristic of mind to entertain thoughts and if it has nothing else to think of, it should necessarily entertain the thought of some other object of the outer world. Therefore, in all the Yogas the calmness of the mind is prescribed. Mumukshatva is a burning desire to rid oneself of one's own limitations. Dama is the self-control, or the control of the senses. Uparati is the self-withdrawal. This does not mean the withdrawal from the world. It only means concentration on the work undertaken and self-forgetfulness in that work. Titiksha is the power of endurance. It is the capacity of the mind to accommodate cheerfully all its vicissitudes. Sraddha is the faith by which the pupil understands the import of teacher's advice. Samadhana is the tranquillity of mind.

It is these qualities that make a true 'Brahmchari' or student. The conditions necessary for the taught, according to Vivekananda, are purity in thought, speech and act; a real thirst after knowledge, and a spirit of perseverance. Arjuna possessed all these qualities. The humility of Arjuna is revealed in his admitting that he does not know what to do and what not to do and requesting Krishna to teach him. "I am your disciple, teach me what is good for me" (II. 7) When the pupil approaches the teacher in this attitude, we can understand that he is a real seeker. The spirit of enquiry with a sincere purpose of knowing is essential for every student. The knowledge has to be acquired through prostration, enquiry
and service to the teacher. (IV. 3). This is an attitude of total surrender. This is not a blind submissiveness in order to gain some material benefit. This surrender shows the absence of egoism in the pupil. Egoism always makes an individual incapable of understanding the real. Egoism brings selfishness and subjectivism. It is a 'jandice' which makes all things of the world appear as he thinks from his own view. Hence the pupil has to surrender his will to the Guru and prepare himself as a sincere student. Surrender does not mean passive listening to the teacher. He must also have the spirit of enquiry.

All the students may not be endowed with all the qualities prescribed as above. The task of education is to develop these qualities gradually in pupils in order to make them real seekers of knowledge and truth. Education is not only giving what they fit for, but also improving their personalities.

(3) Qualities of the Teacher:

Bhagavad Gita equally emphasizes the importance of three aspects of education, namely pupil, teacher and the instruction. Neither of them must be overemphasized. Education, according to Gita, consists in the co-operation of both the teacher and the pupil in order to gain the knowledge of the Supreme and to practise it in every day life, for the spiritual upliftment of the individual and for the good of the society. So a right education implies a right instruction by a right teacher to a right pupil through right methods. All these aspects have been perfectly blended in the Gita, with Sri Krishna as an ideal
teacher and Arjuna as an ideal student.

Even though every individual is potentially divine, he needs another soul, from whom the impulse to quicken his realisation comes. The person from whom such impulse comes is called a Guru -- the teacher. To convey such an impulse to any soul, the teacher must possess the power to transmit it and the pupil must possess the capacity to receive that impulse.

The relationship between the teacher and taught is very unique. The student has an attitude of total surrender to his master. The teacher also, having accepted a disciple, must consider his duty to guide him always with kindness, love and affection. If the student is expected to follow faithfully every bit of instruction given by the teacher, the teacher also has the responsibility of removing all the doubts of the student. A teacher should be not only a man of self experience in himself, but he should also have a large heart, flowing out in kindness for all types of pupils. This is necessary, because without it the master will not be able to come down to the level of the disciples and sympathetically appreciate the students' difficulties in understanding.

To guide and instruct the pupil and help him to realize his self, the teacher must have full realisation and complete grasp of the subject matter. Apart from the scriptural knowledge and erudition, he must have self-control and well developed heart and an irresistible flow of mercy which demands no special cause for its manifestation.
The picture that is portrayed in the Gita is that of a confused and disheartened student and a wise and unperturbed teacher. "To Arjuna, who was sorrowing between the two armies, Krishna spoke these words as if smiling".

Here Arjuna is weeping for his lack of confidence and Krishna who diagnosed the cause of his student's escapism, is smiling. The first duty of a teacher when a student approaches him with a faint-heartedness, is to instill the courage and inject in him the required self-confidence. Every individual is potentially divine and all-powerful. But because he does not know his capacities, he feels dejected and loses his heart. So every teacher should encourage the student as Krishna did with his very first sentence, "Shaking off this mean faint-heartedness, arise".

The teacher has to be very kind and treat the pupils as his friends. Though Krishna was superior in knowledge and wisdom, he treated Arjuna as a friend. "Since you are my devotee and friend, the same ancient Yoga has been taught to three by Me". (IV-3)

A teacher should be an example

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कुण्डलिनी: प्रहसन्तिव (२-१०)

कुण्डलिनी: प्रहसन्तिव (२-१)

स पुरातनं योग: प्रक्ष: पुरातनं (४-१)
to his pupil by his conduct and behaviour. Whatever he preaches them, he should practise it. Krishna declared a general truth, "Whatever a great man does, others also copy; that which he accepts as authority, people only follow". The pupils mostly imitate the teacher. If the teacher is a man of character, he would be moulding his children as worthy citizens, not only by precept but also by an example.

At the end of his instruction the teacher has to adopt a democratic attitude and give freedom to his pupil to act as he likes. Thus Krishna spoke, "Thus knowledge has been declared to you by me, reflect upon it and act as you like". This is a democratic attitude to be taken by the teacher.

The pupils also, having got all the doubts cleared, must be in position to say as Arjuna said, "My delusion is destroyed and I have gained my memory, through your grace. I stand, free from doubt. I will carry out your behest". (XVIII, 73)

Gita gives freedom to the individual to put forth his efforts and develop himself. The teacher is a friend, philosopher and guide. But it is the sincere effort which
enables the pupil to achieve his ultimate goal. "One should raise oneself through the Self". (उद्वरैदात्मात्मायाम्)

(VI. 5) Gita gives a guarantee that those who strive will certainly reach their goal. There is no loss or wastage of the efforts. "In this there is no waste of any understanding, even the least bit of this saves one from great danger". (II. 40). "There is no destruction for him who does good". (VI. 40)

Sincere efforts will always give fruit and the pupil has to work hard in order to reach the goal and the teacher has to guide him on the right path.

(4) Pupil-Teacher Relation:

About the pupil-teacher relation Swami Chinmayananda says:

"The relationship between the teacher and the taught in India is unique. The student of course has an attitude of total surrender to his master, whom he has tested and found fit for total reverence as nothing short of a living and speaking God. The teacher also, having accepted a disciple, considers it his duty to guide the boy always with kindness, love and affection, a thousand times more than any father could ever feel for his own son. If the student is expected to follow faithfully every bit of the instruction, given by the teacher, the teacher also has the responsibility of removing all the doubts of the student, even for the hundredth time, if need be". 2

Sri Krishna had all the qualifications prescribed by Sastras for a teacher. A teacher should be not only a man of self-experience in himself, but he should have a large heart

flowing out in kindness for all types of pupils. This is necessary because without it the master will not be able to come down to the level of the disciples and sympathetically appreciate the students' difficulties in understanding. Every man of realisation and wisdom can not aspire to become an efficient teacher in spiritualism. To guide and instruct a deluded soul and help him to unwin himself, he must have full realization and complete grasp of the subject matter.

Apart from the scriptural knowledge and erudition, the teacher must have large share of self-control and riches of a well-developed heart; irresistible flow of mercy, which demands no special cause for its manifestation (Avyajakaruna), specially when it descends upon those who have surrendered themselves to him and have desperately reached the feet of the master as a spiritual refuge.

The picture that is portrayed in the Gita is that of a confused and disheartened student and a wise and unperturbed teacher. "To Arjuna who was sorrowing between the two armkes, Krishna spoke these words as if smiling". (II. 10) Here Arjuna is weeping for his lack of confidence and Krishna who diagnosed the cause for his student's escapism, is smiling. The first duty of a teacher, when a student approaches him with a faint-heartedness, is to instill the courage and inject - in him the required self-confidence. Every individual is potentially divine and all-powerful. But because he does not know his capacities he feels, dejected and loses heart. So Krishna, in the very first sentence said, "Shaking off this mean faint-heartedness, arise". (II. 3).
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