INTRODUCTION

Gandhiji left as his heritage a spiritual force that must in God's good time prevail over arms and armaments and dark doctrines of violence.

- New York Times (Jan 31, 1948)

It is an undisputed fact that there has been a vast amount of literature written by Mahatma Gandhi and on Mahatma Gandhi. Personally I had the golden opportunity of examining most of it at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C., part of it at the Library of the school of Oriental and African Studies in London and some of it in Mauritius, my home country which the Mahatma visited in 1901 and where we have now a Mahatma Gandhi Institute that is functioning since 1975. Perhaps one must spend a whole life-time to read and understand the vast literature in respect of Gandhiji as it should be or ought to be. Even then I would be inclined to think that one would not rest entirely satisfied with one's endeavour. Gandhiji's movement for the education of the masses has been an institution by itself.

Perspective

Gandhiji did not turn a 'Mahatma', or a great soul overnight. He was neither born great nor was greatness thrust upon him. He achieved greatness through Nishakama Karma, that is, selfless action. His comprehensive and meaningful autobiography bears testimony to this. His work has been a monumental one that is unique of its kind because of the truthfulness, straightforwardness and simplicity of its content. It is through it that the Mahatma reminds us of the ancient philosophical saying that 'whatever a man sows that shall he reap' and this was the spiritual basis of all his activities in life and education.
Besides his autobiography, Gandhiji produced all kinds of useful and worthwhile books on different aspects of life and education which, to him, constituted an indivisible whole that could not be uselessly or worthlessly fragmented. He argued that one could not divide social, economic, political, and purely religious work into watertight compartments. Life, according to Gandhiji's philosophy, had to be lived fully and education could not be other than a series of experiences likely to generate a new spiritual life through the old life itself.

Both eastern and western scholars all over the world praised Gandhiji for his practical philosophy of life and education. Such a praise was specially directed to the spiritual foundation of his continuous and devoted service to mankind. One would be happy to learn that a Mauritian scholar of note, Basdeo Bissoondoyal, sees Gandhiji not as a body but as a soul and even adds that it became clear to him that Gandhiji wished to see the really educated people as persons of strong moral fibre. Other thinkers too pointed out the spiritual or moral force inherent in Gandhiji's philosophy. William Cenkner saw in the selfless activity of the Mahatma a creative spiritual force that could bring change to a nation and at the same time link continuity with the past cultural tradition. Herrymon Maurer observed that Gandhiji lived so that people could realize that there was a force more potent than material power called spiritual or moral force which the modern man could use to break the chains of violence or brute force. Lloyd Rudolph and Suzanne Rudolph spoke of Gandhiji's approach as a new force to a nation of being at ease with its cultural heritage, while living in a politically subject state. Erik Erikson brought the theme that Gandhiji, in his understanding of himself, his culture and his environment, attained victory over material power by applying not only psychological insight but also spiritual force.
Krishna Kripalani saw in Gandhiji a politician and a saint, and, at times, wondered whether he was a saint among politicians or a politician among saints. In a symposium on Gandhiji, several admirers of the Mahatma saw in him an educationist par excellence who could combine the development of the Head, the Heart and the Hand through Nishkama Karma or selfless action and Sadhana or spiritual discipline to make man a spiritual being rather than a mechanical robot. M.S. Patel found in the Mahatma not only an educationist par excellence but also a practical philosopher who managed to evolve an a posteriori philosophy of education which could guide men to become a fully integrated person. D.M. Datta found in the philosophy of Gandhiji a guide for man who, through diverse worthwhile activities, both internal and external, could be reformed materially as well as spiritually.

Significance

After reviewing the essentials of Gandhian literature and trying to see them all in perspective, I have not the least hesitation to state that there is actually a spiritual element that runs through all what Gandhiji felt, thought and did, while he experimented with life and education in South Africa, where he stayed for twenty one years, and also in India, where he spent the rest of his life. I believe that this element has a meaningful foundation which needs to be explored and therefore the present study has a special and unique significance of its own, specially in a world society sickened by violence and restlessness.

My intention here is not to allow this study to be cast in the familiar mould of simply praising Gandhiji for his selfless service to mankind but to unveil and analyze that spiritual foundation which is both of importance and relevance to the true purpose of education which, to me,
could not be other than Self-realization or liberation. Gandhiji, while agreeing with the Sanskrit saying *sa vidya ya vimuktaye*, that is, *knowledge is that which liberates* explained that self-realization or liberation was a freedom from *all manner of servitude* meaning both *domination from outside and domination from one's own artificial needs.*[^1] It was actually a freedom from ignorance that could help to wipe out the self and replace it by God or merge it with God, thus reaching the ultimate goal of Self and God realization.

As a matter of fact, what Gandhiji had in his mind and what he also had in the core of his heart was an awakening of mankind in the sense that each and every individual could move towards Self-realization and God-realization through a well established spiritual foundation, without which there could not be any progress, prosperity and peace which every world citizen in searching for. He showed all this to us in his philosophy of life which was based on the spiritual values of Truth, Love and Non-violence. He argued that nobody could arrive at the Truth without using Love and Non-violence as the means. He also showed us the way in his new philosophy of education, that was based on the culture of the Head, the Heart and the Hand. Here, he advocated that nobody could work selflessly and effectively for the welfare of one and all without a perfect harmonization of the three H. However, he laid much emphasis on the culture of the Heart - that special spiritual growth which is lacking in modern education and which, if coupled with the culture of the Head - that special intellectual or mental growth, could purify the Self and make the inner voice speak unmistakably so that the Hand could act rightly. It was not for nothing that once he forcefully wrote that *Man have always been found throughout the world claiming to speak for the inner voice* but *before one is able to listen to that voice, one has to go through a long and fairly severe course*
of training. While analyzing and evaluating the ideas of Gandhiji, this study supports the idea of spiritual training in a world which is becoming too materialistic and which is inclined to ignore that 'the end to be sought is human happiness combined with full mental and moral growth.'

It is true that everybody hankers after happiness but it is a selfish happiness generally based on intellectual or mental growth only, without caring for the full moral or spiritual growth that actually leads man to work for the welfare of one and all. The significance of this study lies therefore in the emphasis given to the full moral or spiritual growth which, to me, has its root in a spiritual foundation that could help the war-ridden materialistic world to be relieved from its state of boredom, anxiety and unrest. I would argue that intellectual strength alone could be harmful whereas if it is coupled with moral or spiritual force the person so formed would be an asset and a harmless human being to society. Furthermore, if D.S. Sharma stated that the teachings of Gandhiji "form a landmark in the upward progress of man", I do not see the reason why these teachings should not be emphasized and taken seriously so that the underlying spirituality or spiritual foundation could take a person out of his or her animal instincts and raise him or her to the level of a warm-hearted, empathetic and effective human being of character, insight, vision and understanding. I would say that it is only then he or she could control his or her intellectual and physical strength and could become a real Homo Sapiens in all walks of life, instead of being a simple Homo Faber without any moral fibre.

**Problem**

The criticisms of the present system of education all over the world are many and varied. On the whole, they concern both the philosophy behind
the system and the practice of education. However, I consider the criticisms to be of no use whatsoever unless and until one knows the actual problem and makes an attempt to attack its root-cause.

Nobody could deny that we are living in a fast changing technological world society and what each and every system of education is really aiming at is to create a good, stable and ideal society. I would tend to think that this aim would never be realized if one would continue to destroy individuality which lies at the very core of all progress, prosperity and peace. By individuality I mean a completely integrated personality involving a full development of the body, the mind and the spirit of a person. I would therefore add that the problem of education is not instrumental or intellectual but-valuational. We have done more harm than good by ignoring Mahatma Gandhi who always fought for the education of the full man, specially for the spiritual growth which ought to be at par with the intellectual and the physical training.

What is happening with our system of education to-day is that it is constantly avoiding the truth that 'if one man gains spiritually the whole world gains with him and, if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent.' In the same vein, it is also avoiding another fact of life that 'a nation cannot advance without the unity of which it is composed.' The spiritual ought not to be divorced from the material. It forms one complete unit with the material. In sum, the problem lies in the fact that the entire educational system is failing to realize that to instruct the Head and the Hand is not the same as to instruct the Heart or the Spirit. Furthermore, it is also failing to realize that the strength of a good, stable and ideal world society lies not in its economic structure but in the moral and spiritual competence of the individual whose 'still small voice within', which is
the final arbiter when there is conflict of duty has to be trained through certain spiritual disciplines called Sadhanas. It is this element that is lacking in our modern education which, if implemented, could free the mind and calm down the nervous system of each and every individual by making him or her more efficient so that he or she could see problems clearly and live in harmony with himself or herself as well as with the world society, without disrupting the whole fabric of life.

After all, any society is made up of individuals and it is individuals that build up a world society. But what is noticeable at present is that our modern set up is torn and worn threadbare by a false dichotomy between the individuals and the society. With an unprecedented accumulation of knowledge and with all our technological know-how as well as know-that, it is sad to observe that the entire society is sickened by war, strife, hatred, unrest, boredom, anxiety and suspicion. Men like Horace Mann and Friedrich Froebel, who were pioneers of nineteenth century education, wanted a new age of enlightenment in which man would be better off but their hopes have not been realized. What we are experiencing is that conflicts and tensions are becoming more destructive, violence and hatred are very much rampant, drug abuse and crime rate are in the ascendancy and the way all these are going on mounting seems to be an alarming sign not only for our societal stability, order and discipline but also for our progress, prosperity and peace.

While giving too much importance to material rather than spiritual values, our system is creating a confusion between means and ends, or, in other words, between aims and purpose of education. It is considering much more the conquest of the outer space instead of the conquest of the inner space and the improvement of human relations to the extent that Harold Titus
could not help saying that 'knowledge seems to be divorced from values' and that 'without a strong sense of values and of direction, the human spirit tends to weaken and deteriorate'. Even Arnold Toynbee, the famous British historian, did not fail to point out that 'man's achievement of gaining the mastery over non-human nature has been bought at the price of enslaving himself to a new man-made environment which is more uncongenial, tyrannical and psychologically disturbing and is one of the causes of the present worldwide unrest, conflict, violence and mutual frustration of human wills.' He went on to say that 'the material aside of human nature is not an end in itself but a means to an end', and added that, 'the true purposes of human life are spiritual'.

Gandhiji would have solved the problem had we understood the spiritual foundation of his philosophy of life and education. What we have done is that we have considered our problem to be merely material and we have left it as an issue, without any attempt to explore it and make it accessible to one and all for the promotion of understanding, insight and vision. In fact, Gandhiji did show us where the shoe was pinching and how to get everything under control but we have not paid much attention to the practical aspect of the concept of spirituality inherent in his philosophy - a spirituality which could, in good time, direct us to the true purpose of education.

Be it noted, en passant, that Mahatma Gandhi, unlike most philosophers and educators, was not an armchair theorist or a pure idealist but a practical philosopher of life and education who lived an examined way of life. Time and again he showed us that simple living and high thinking is a good path to follow and that any activity to be worthwhile, useful and meaningful
should have a spiritual foundation. And this is why he used to say that "to develop the spirit is to build character and to enable one to work towards a knowledge of God and self-realization." According to him, therefore, the container of knowledge, that is, the Self had to be expanded and illumined through right and proper education. It had to be made aware of the existing exoteric and esoteric knowledge, failing which no person could possibly perform selfless action nor could he or she control himself or herself to become a truly educated human being in world society. Once he even said that spiritual training was "an essential part of the training of the young and that all training without the culture of the spirit was of no use, and might be even harmful."  

Purpose

While trying to solve the problem mentioned above, the purpose of this study cannot be stated in one single sentence or one simple idea. It is three-fold.

Firstly, the purpose is to investigate the spiritual foundation of the activities of the Mahatma who, through various experiments conducted in South Africa and India, has very ably given to the entire human race an *à posteriori* philosophy of life and education, which is likely to lead world society towards actual Progress, Prosperity and Peace.

Secondly it is to prove that the actual purpose of all education is Self-realization 'sarvasastra prayojanam atma darshanam' - a purpose which is impossible to attain without *sadhana* or spiritual discipline that helps to bring actual Progress, Prosperity and Peace - the three 'P' resulting from the three 'H' representing the harmonization of the culture of the Head, the Heart and the Hand, inherent in the philosophy of life and educa-
Thirdly, it is also to show to what extent the spiritual foundation of Gandhiji's philosophy of life and education is both important and relevant to the purpose of all education and how spiritual foundation, in line with intellectual and physical development, can be facilitated and made practical in our modern fast-changing technological society, being given that man, by nature, as seen by Gandhiji, 'is neither mere intellect nor gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone but a proper and harmonious combination of all the three'.

**Approach**

I tend to believe that the system of education, as proposed by Gandhiji, through his various life experiences and experiments, is a sound and humane one and that it could be made relevant and practical to the world of education if its spiritual significance regarding its foundation is studied in a scientific way. The methodology I have used therefore is (1) library approach (2) experts' consultation approach and (3) questionnaire approach. I have thus made a critical examination and a philosophical analysis of the pertinent writings on and by the Mahatma. I have also used a few supporting writings and materials by other thinkers and philosophers to promote Gandhiji's thoughts in the realm of spirituality. While recognizing that the philosophy of life and education of Gandhiji is a vast subject, I have not failed to make my topic as narrow as possible so that the entire study, in the form of the present thesis, could be as specific as possible.

Without showing any special scholarship, I have divided the study into different chapters, apart from the present introduction, a conclusion with a questionnaire and four appendices. In chapter one, a linguistic and con-
ceptual analysis of 'philosophy of life' as compared to 'philosophy of education' has been made, based on the general philosophy of Gandhiji. In chapter two, the spirituality of Gandhiji with its nature, significance, importance and relevance to the purpose of education has been presented. Chapter three deals with Gandhiji's early, and later phases of the spiritual foundation of his philosophy of life and education. Chapter four is in connection with Gandhiji's South African experiences in education. Chapter five deals with his Indian experiments and his urge to serve and educate. Chapter six is in connection with Gandhiji's spiritual influence in Mauritius as a meaningful impact. The conclusion contains arguments in favour of the spirituality of Gandhiji and how far such a spirituality could be helpful in the practice of modern education to remedy the malady of our sick society. The questionnaire and the four appendices deal with desirable attitudes and values which one requires to make the teaching-learning transaction a real success in the world of education.
REFERENCES TO INTRODUCTION


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5 Herrymon Maurer, Great soul (New Delhi: Orient Longmans, 1969).


16 M.K. Gandhi, *Young India* (4-12-24).

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CHAPTER I

GANDHIJI'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE AND PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The philosophy of Gandhi is not life-negation but life-affirmation. It is participation in life armed with the spirit of detached action.

- M. Yamunacharya

To understand the meaning of philosophy, to make the difference between philosophy of life and philosophy of education, and to justify their connection, if any, are the objectives of this chapter. I tend to believe that, to do this important piece of work, the study of the philosophy of life and that of education of Mahatma Gandhi is quite appropriate. Here is a great soul who comes with a philosophy that is a harmonious blending of both. However, no one would really understand the Mahatma's philosophy, whether it is of life or of education, if one thinks that he lived and worked for the liberation of India and the emancipation of Indians alone.

The fact remains that, although Gandhiji launched his movement of Satyagraha i.e. truth-grasping in South Africa, where he stayed for twenty-one years, and in India, where he spent the rest of his life, his philosophy was quite straightforward. It was directed with full participation and life-affirmation towards the entire human race with a spirit of detached action, as observed by M. Yamunacharya. Through it he had a message to give to the world and that message was not meant for India only but also for the entire world in that it was universal. Gandhiji
himself confirmed it by stating that 'I believe my message to be universal'. In fact, it is really found to be universal when we try to analyze what philosophy is and how he personally looked at it.

**Philosophy**

Coming back to our understanding of the meaning of philosophy, I think it would be proper to clarify the term not in the usual manner but seeing it from two different angles; the Greek concept and the Vedic concept. Only then, according to me, one would be able to understand Gandhiji's feelings, thoughts and actions in whatever he did in life and education.

Philosophy comes from two Greek words: **Philos** meaning 'love' and **Sophia** meaning 'of wisdom'. In Sanskrit the term used is not philosophy but **darshan** which means 'perception' or 'vision'. **Darshan** is derived from the root verb **drish** meaning 'to see'. In his *Dictionary of Philosophy*, D.D. Runes describes philosophy as a science of knowledge and E.V. Shirk in *The Journal of General Education*, published by the Chicago Press, explains that philosophy is self-experienced and is introspective specially in search of elements.

By and large, from both its Greek and Sanskrit concepts, I would argue that it is an error to believe that Philosophy is, in a conventional way, a special subject reserved only for sages and seers or scholars and that it deals only with mysterious matters which are far from being practical and down-to-earth. What is actually meant is a love of wisdom which is acquired and developed through perceiving and seeing the various experiences of life. To understand this, let us look at Gandhiji's work. He started life as an ordinary man and was destined to be 'a great soul in a peasant's
garb*, as Rabindranath Tagore put it. The way he philosophized was so practical that it touched the real life problems of the people. Maharajkrishna Rasgotra, Minister for political affairs in the Embassy of India in Washington D.C., rightly said of Gandhiji that

The problems of real life seldom escaped his notice. His solutions, often unconventional, were surprisingly realistic.4

In fact, Gandhiji made philosophy a practical activity. He saw around him the bad influence of a sick and immoral society, the evil effects of two world wars and the false pride people were taking in the harnessing of the power of the atom for their own destruction. He pointed out how one could tackle these problems by exploring one's inner self with a view to improving human relationship and working selflessly for the betterment of one and all. The novelty in his approach was that he experimented with life by perceiving and seeing the various problems with a calmness of mind, a smoothness of feeling and a sweetness of speech which astonished many modern scholars who used to think of the problems with a biased feeling, without having any vision of far-sightedness or of the full development of the individual in society. M. S. Patel, an educationist of note, once declared that

Gandhiji observed certain facts, classified them on sufficiently large scale, judged them and draw conclusions from them, unbiased by personal feeling.5

Being seriously concerned with the betterment of society through the full development of its individuals, Gandhiji used philosophy as a useful tool for reflective, analytic, and prescriptive thinking in order to influence the conduct of life of the people for the better and more decent living. It was not for nothing that even John Dewey, the American
philosopher par Excellence, who revolutionized Education in the United States, insisted that

Whenever philosophy has been taken seriously it has always been assumed that it signified a wisdom that would influence the conduct of life.  

**Philosophy of Life**

One of our greatest drawbacks in modern life to-day is that we rarely ask fundamental questions. In case we do ask them, either we look for somebody else to answer them or, if we have the answers at hand, we rarely go deep down to their actual significance. No doubt, several questions about ourselves and our environment come to our mind but two inevitable questions which confront the inseparable trio—parents, teachers and students— are what is life and what is its purpose. It is the answers to these that usually constitute one's philosophy of life.

Some people argue that life is a struggle, a dream, a challenge, a journey, an opportunity, a duty and the like. Others argue that it is a song, a game, a promise, a joy, a sorrow, an adventure and the like. I would say that it is neither one nor the other but a sum-total of all these and therefore, by all fair means, let us accept the struggle, realize the dream, meet the challenge, complete the journey, seize the opportunity, perform the duty, fulfil the promise, control the joy, overcome the sorrow and embark on the adventure very bravely as Mahatma Gandhi did.

In fact, Gandhiji's way of life enabled him to seek Truth through Love and Non-violence and to see that life is that which evolves, grows, develops and progresses. In this connection, it was rightly observed:
His triple passion - to search in a scientific spirit for the law of the individual and social well-being and progress, to establish the truth of that law through love and non-violence, and always to return good for evil - dominated his life from beginning to end.7

To Gandhiji, life to be lived fully was a series of experiences; good and bad, and nothing should be repugnant, obnoxious and distressing. When we see and realize how a rose plant integrate flowers and thorns together we tend to understand Gandhiji's approach to life. It is in integration that progress lies. He actually showed how to live progressively while integrating everything with love and non-violence in order to see Truth face to face. He once declared

> I am trying every moment of my Life to be guided by love and non-violence. I am essentially a lover of peace. And I assure those who oppose me that I shall not do a single thing which I know may be contrary to Truth.

It could be argued, by the way, that it would be impossible for someone to accept the threefold path of Truth - Love - and Non-violence as one's philosophy of life. The fact is that the same life would provide different and distinct visions, depending on different individuals. By analyzing a few examples, we can find that to a scientist life is a great laboratory wherein he could discover great powers; to a poet, life is a manifestation of nature in an extravagant beauty; to a peasant, life is insignificant having nothing spectacular about it; to a pessimist, life is an inferno of misfortunes and tragedies; and to an optimist, life is a paradise full of opportunities and pleasures.

I said earlier that life is a series of experiences, good and bad;
and from examples just cited it is found that, the objects remaining
the same; the experiences differ from person to person and each reaction
from different individuals depends upon the constitution of their inner-
self or 'inner equipment. It could be said then that life has no precise
and clear-cut definition because the pattern seems to change according
to personal vision. But Gandhi saw life in a much broader sense and he
was categorical when he declared:

Life is an aspiration. Its mission is
to strive after perfection which is self-
realization. The deal must not be lowered
because of our weaknesses or imperfections.
The silent cry daily goes out to Truth to
help me to remove these weaknesses and im-
perfections. The silent cry daily goes out
to Truth to help me to remove these weaknesses
and imperfections of mine.9

What Gandhiji advocated was that out of the life of full experiences
of different individuals who grow and develop in different fields, come
certain general guidelines to behaviour. These guidelines tend to give
directions to our pattern of life and are called values. In Gandhiji's
view, values could change and differ but a few eternal values of life
would remain constant and can constantly be related to the experiences
that shape them and test them. Three of these values are Truth, Love and
Non-violence which each and every individual cherishes and prizes in the
core of his heart, although at times he does not seem to stick to them.
Consciously or unconsciously, however, they are always with the individual
all the time but their uncovering is to be encouraged.

If Gandhiji thought it wise to consider Truth as the goal and Love
and Non-violence as the means to that goal10 he did it in a scientific
spirit. To have a good goal is to give direction to a good life. It is true that he did not explain it in detail but his feelings, thoughts and actions throughout his life proved it beyond the shadow of any doubt. Let us try to reason it out. Values such as Truth, Love and Non-violence are part of anyone's living at a certain point of time and place. They usually involve more than simple extremes of right and wrong; good or bad, and true or false. With Gandhiji, these values were close to his heart. Truth for him was God and to reach Him, only Love and Non-violence could be the means. Suppose in the place of God, we put Gold as the goal, we would then develop a certain competition by having recourse to hate and violence to grasp that Gold. Gandhiji advised us to remove lust from our life - the '1' which, I think, could be deleted from the 'Gold' to make it become 'God', through certain spiritual disciplines. He himself said:

To see the universal and all-pervading spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life.11

The philosophy of life of Gandhiji could therefore be understood in the context of his three-fold path of Truth, Love and Non-violence. When he spoke of God as Truth,12 he meant that we should strive hard to be pure in our feelings, thoughts and actions and to be pure to that extent the lust had to vanish into thin air in order to realize the self and see Truth face to face as one's goal. 'Without overcoming lust', he said, 'man cannot hope to rule over self'.13 After all, the true purpose of life is 'self-realization' and, with Gandhiji, it went further still as it also meant 'a Knowledge of God'. He himself made it clear when he said that 'to develop the spirit is to build character and to enable one to work towards a knowledge of God and self-realization'.14
In the Philosophy of life of Gandhiji, it is observed that man is the maker of his own destiny but if he thinks that he is also the controller of results all the time, then he comes to grief. As for Gandhiji, he had faith in God who helped him throughout life and whom he qualified in the following terms:

God is that indefinable something which we all feel but which we do not know. To me God is Truth and Love. God is ethics and morality. God is fearlessness. God is the source of light and life and yet He is above and beyond all these. God is conscience. He is even the atheism of the atheist. He transcends speech and reason. He is the purest essence. He simply is to those who have faith. He is patient but He is also terrible. He is the greatest democrat the world knows, for He leaves us unfettered to make our own choice between evil and good.¹⁵

Gandhiji is of the opinion therefore that Truth, which is synonymous with God and which has different manifestations, could be realized by every man provided he made it a rule to use Love and Non-violence as the means to arrive at it. A person may not reach the destination in his short span of life but sometimes, if well planned, the journey itself could be made interesting. Many a time the travelling is more meaningful and pleasant than the destination itself. The person could therefore become better and better, day in and day out, in every field of human activity and could realize, in the long run, that Truth, Love and Non-violence are not abstract ideas but realistic virtues that could be practised in life. Gandhiji himself practised them at every moment of his life. He once declared unhesitatingly that 'My need is service of God and, therefore, of humanity'.¹⁶ His philosophy did, in fact, push him to be a real Karmayogi, that is, a man of selfless action who was yearning for perfection himself but who cherished the hope to better world society through his philosophy of life and education by serving mankind.
Philosophy of education

I argued earlier that there are several fundamental questions which come to our mind and that two of them could be: What is life and what is its purpose. This I did in order to establish what I mean by a philosophy of life. Furthermore, I used the life of Gandhiji to illustrate his philosophy in a simple way so that it could be understood by one and all. Now, two other questions still remain to be discussed, namely, what is education and what is its purpose. By doing this, my object would be to show what I mean by philosophy of education. Here again I would illustrate it by taking Gandhiji's views into consideration.

If philosophy of life signifies love of wisdom which one could acquire through perceiving, seeing and discussing the various experiences of life, I would say that philosophy of education signifies a love of wisdom which one could acquire through perceiving, seeing and discussing the various educational problems we encounter in life. First of all, the term 'education' itself, if not properly understood, could be for the modern man a tool of destruction. Depending on a person's philosophy of life, history has it that it could either be a tool of oblivion as experienced in Nazi Germany or a tool of survival as expressed by Friedrich Froebel. Following Gandhiji's philosophy of life, I would say that education is neither a tool of destruction and oblivion, nor one of survival. It is, in fact, one of integration, reconstruction and understanding, without which progress, prosperity and peace would be impossible.

The term 'Education' could be referred to any deliberate effort to nurture, cultivate, foster, modify, change or develop human behaviour through worthwhile activities in order to better world society. More specifically it could also be referred to organized schooling that are likely to involve
those activities through which arts and sciences are transmitted and improved from one generation to another. Anyway, good education would only occur when elements of betterment, growth and development are involved. Gandhiji clearly told us what he understood by the term 'Education' when he said:

By education, I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit.

For Gandhiji, any philosophy of education or any system of education that lacked an insight into the concept of the person would be oblivious of its serious task. Man, according to the Mahatma, could neither be a machine nor an animal but a spiritual being who could grow and develop so as to become better and better. Man does not possess a body only for him to move but also a mind for him to think and discriminate as well as a spirit which could give him a control over the two and which we often call personality, character or individuality. In each and every experience of life, man usually contacts the world of objects and the world of people and animals through the media of the three constituents in him: body, mind and spirit. Such a fact is undeniable even by the various tyro who wants to enquire into reality.

In the philosophy of education of the Mahatma it is easy then to understand the physical body which is the greatest aspect of the human personality constituting the five organs of perception and the five organs of action. Although the size and the shape of the body differ from person to person, the essential material composing it and the function of the organs are common to all persons. He symbolized the physical function of the body by saying that education should take care of the 'culture of the
Hand*, because without the movement of the hand - a symbol for action - a symbol for action - man would be inert. Coming to the thinking aspect of the person, he symbolised it with the 'culture of the Head', because without the mind, which has its seat in the head, and which needs to develop into what we usually call the intellect, man is lost and cannot pass a good judgement on any physical action. Last but not least, coming to the controlling aspect of the person, he symbolised it with the 'culture of the heart' because without the heart, which is the seat of our feelings and emotions, and which could either sharpen or cloud the mind, man is again lost and cannot control himself. Thus, by emphasizing the cultures of the three 'H!', Gandhiji clarified the term 'Education' by stating:

True education is that which draws out and stimulates the physical, intellectual and spiritual faculties of the children.16

Gandhiji was, in fact, right in saying that true education should draw out and stimulate the physical, intellectual and spiritual faculties of the children. If we are strong physically and sharp intellectually, we are considered to be functional persons but we might be cunning and selfish as well. It is the spiritual make-up that makes a man's education complete. The full personality reconstruction rests therefore on the development of the person's innate tendencies which should include his spirit or his character.19 Only when the spirit is good that man could be good and, according to the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, this goodness of character could not be acquired without the culture of the heart or spiritual training:

To awaken the heart is to awaken the dormant soul, to awaken reason, and to inculcate discrimination between good and evil.20
May it be noted that, in the philosophy of education of Mahatma Gandhi, the spirit, the heart and the soul are synonymously used for the development of character. He gave it the first place when he once said that 'my reason follows my heart' and 'without the latter it would go astray.' Did Gandhiji therefore mean that an educator should start with the culture of the Heart before attending to that of the Head and the Hand? It was an error, according to him, if all the three were not co-ordinated. He clearly warned us that 'an absence of proper co-ordination and harmony among the various faculties of body, mind and soul could bring moral and spiritual anarchy.' His philosophy seemed to be in perfect line with the vedic view of man in which body, mind and soul were given their right places so that the purpose of true education could develop a fully integrated personality, leading towards self-realization and God-realization. Humayun Kabir supported this argument when he once wrote:

The Indian conception of man is thus one in which body, mind and soul were given their proper position and functions.

When Gandhiji built up his philosophy of education in connection with the three H, he did it by experience and experimentation in South Africa and India. He proved to be a practical educator par excellence who showed to the world at large that what is actually required in any good system of education, is a full integrated and harmonious individual in whom physical, intellectual and spiritual or moral powers could develop equally. If such an individual forms part of world society, it is then that a generation of Progress, Prosperity and Peace could be built up, or, in other words, it is then that the process of education through the three H could lead man to the three P, which I referred to earlier.
As we all know, education comes from two Latin words: *educare* and *educere*, the former meaning 'to draw out' and the latter meaning 'to lead forth'. What Gandhiji did in his philosophy of education was to rediscover education in a practical way. He was right when he said that it is a process of drawing out the best from the person so that he or she could grow physically, intellectually and spiritually leading him or her towards self-realization. Of course, Gandhiji did accept that earning a living should be one of the important aims of education but he stressed that learning to live should be a very important aim to lead someone towards self-realization and God-realization through self-development, without which no education could be said to be complete. He once observed:

Though the earning of a living should not be the sole aim of education yet it has to be considered. The purpose of education is self-development. But self-development includes the capacity to earn a living.24

The connection

Having argued what Gandhiji meant by life and that of education, we come now to the crucial point of seeing whether there is any connection between his philosophy of life and his philosophy of education.

Many people would think that the philosophy of life and that of education of Gandhiji were mere theories of life and education and that they do not have any connection whatsoever. Be it noted that theories are usually assumptions of value and, in the case of Gandhiji, what he advocated were not assumptions of value about education and life and their purpose but value judgments made after experimenting with life and education. He put it very clearly when he wrote:
I do not claim to have originated any new principle. I have tried in my own way to apply the eternal truths to our daily life and problems.25

It is not a secret that most of us cling to only a small part of life and think we have discovered the whole truth about life and all its ups and downs. I would say that we are just like a small fish that has been brought up in a small pond with water of its choice, without even an appreciation of unknown waters or of the vast sea. It is true that we can segment, for intensive study, a part of life and call it specialization but when the part is isolated from the whole, intellectual confusion and spiritual anarchy result. Various parts of life have actually an interrelatedness as are various parts of knowledge and it is by living them to the full, like Gandhiji did, that one could make value judgments such as 'Truth is one' and 'God is Truth' and state that we could arrive at that Truth through the dual means of Love and Non-violence. 'I set a high value on my experiments',26 he said, and, at a certain time; he even warned us that we have to do the right thing even though people could misinterpret what we do. He could not help saying:

There is always danger of even the most irreproachable conduct being misinterpreted and misapplied but the right thing has got to be, in spite of the risk of misinterpretation and misapplication.27

When Gandhiji advocated the culture of the three H in order to arrive at the Truth, he again did not make any sweeping theoretical assumption but passed a value judgment based on his experiences and experiments in education. He never hesitated to inform us that

I myself was once a teacher,
And the claim may be advanced that
I am still one. I have experience in education since I have made experiments in that field.28
And, as a result of his experiences and his experiments, he did not accept the dry teaching of the three R's which could only make people become reading, writing or counting machines. His philosophy was quite straightforward when he stated:

Unless the development of the mind and the body goes hand in hand with corresponding awakening of the soul, the former alone could prove a poor lop-sided affair. 29

There is then a connection between his philosophy of life based on the spiritual and eternal values of Truth, Love and Non-violence and that of education based on the culture of the Head, Heart and Hand which, when taken together, could build up an integrated person leading him towards a complete control of his spirit with a view to promoting a generation of Progress, Prosperity and Peace. Had there not been any connection he would not have advised the students that

All this mental and literary training that you receive will be of no avail to you unless it is broad-based on Truth and Love. Truth will make you brave and fearless men, able to give a good account of yourselves, whenever you go. Love will make life bearable for you, because love has a special quality of attracting abundance of love in return. 30

And Gandhiji did not stop there. He also put forward his value judgment on Ahimsa in education, that is, Non-violence in education, without which there could not be right and smooth mutual relationship between persons and no consideration and respect for others in our world society. He forcefully stated:
Ahimsa in education must have an obvious bearing on the mutual relations of the students. Where the whole atmosphere is redolent with the pure fragrance of ahimsa, boys and girls studying together will live like brothers and sisters, in freedom and yet in self-imposed restraint; the students will be bound to the teachers in ties of filial love, mutual respect and mutual trust.

With the acceptance of the eternal values of Truth, Love and Non-violence in life and in education, social evils could actually be driven away from our environment. By all means, he considered his philosophy of life and that of education to be closely interconnected. His view was that unless and until we make our lives pure the world would not be a good place to live in. His advice was quite meaningful when he declared:

If we are to eliminate communal strife and international strife, we must start with foundations pure and strong by rearing our generations on the education I have adumbrated.

To Gandhiji, therefore, both his philosophy of life and that of education were so closely interconnected that he considered education to be generating new life through life itself by leading us to freedom. *Sa Vidya Ya Vimuktaye*, that is, 'education is that which liberates' was his favourite motto because man, he argued, had to liberate himself, through education, from two kinds of servitude in life: slavery to domination from outside and to one's own artificial needs, failing which the true purpose of life and education which is self-realization and ultimately God-realization would not be possible. In both his philosophy of life and that of education, Gandhiji worked for the liberation of man in general and not for man in a particular country. What he had in mind was to create a
a stable, economically sound and morally secure society. Spirituality should be, according to him, at the very basis of all men's activities; failing which there is bound to be hatred and violence in the world.

2 M.K. Gandhi; *Young India* (April 1928) - An English weekly journal published in Bombay under the Mahatma's supervision from May 7, 1919.


12 M.K. Gandhi; *Young India* (3.3.1925)


15 M.K. Gandhi, Young India (3.3.1925)

16 M.K. Gandhi, Young India (23.10.24)


18 M.K. Gandhi, Harijan (31.7.1937)


23 Humayun Kabir, Indian Philosophy of Education (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1961), p 175.


31 Ibid., p 159.

32 Ibid., p 160.

33 M.K. Gandhi, Young India (19.11.1931)

34 M.K. Gandhi, To the Students, Op.Cit., p 207

35 Ibid., p 288