CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSION

In the present thesis an attempt has been made to study Ethics as a 'theory of virtues'. In the past, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Augustine, Butler, Epictetus, Lombard and many others have formulated their study of Ethics on the foundation of 'virtues', but unfortunately reference to virtues appears to have been neglected by modern ethical thinkers. With the exceptions of N. Hartmann and Mandeville, no modern ethical philosopher, probably has made an exhaustive study of virtues, making Ethics, as it were, a theory of virtues. Out of the various reasons for the depreciation of 'virtue' in modern Ethics, the influence of 'Vienna Circle' appears to be prominent. According to linguistic philosophers, 'clarification of concepts' is the main task of a philosopher. The function of a moral philosopher is to analyse the moral concepts. According to logical positivism the concept of 'virtue', being unverifiable or unanalysable, is indefinable. But it appears that, clarification is necessary, though not sufficient or enough. And I feel that this is the limitation of the linguistic approach that it cannot define virtue by the principle of empirical verification. Verification may be direct or indirect. There are so many
scientific laws which do not admit direct verification, but nevertheless to reject them would be the most unscientific attitude. Again, analysis may be linguistic, or sometimes it may be conceptual; and it is the latter, it appears, which is more useful in understanding abstract terms. And such a conceptual approach is seen in the ethical writings of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, Kant and many others in the history of Western Ethics.

In determining Ethics as a theory of virtues, the first question is about the meaning of the term 'virtue'.

The term virtue can be used in many senses. Mainly the two—Moral and Non-moral. Throughout the present thesis 'virtue' has been used in its moral signification. The other senses are not denied, simply they are morally less significant because these do not reveal the real ethical import of virtue. Again, 'virtue' is sometimes explained in terms of the 'virtues' of man's life. 'Virtue' (in the singular) stands for an abstract or general quality, and the 'virtues' (in the plural) stand for the specifications of this fundamental 'virtue'. 'Virtue' as particular moral excellence is of utmost importance in the study of Ethics. Hence, the answer to the question 'is virtue one or many?' depends upon how we interpret the concept of 'virtue'. Virtue in the abstract, is one, but if we interpret it as the particular moral excellence, then virtues are many. Of course, it is impossible to enumerate
all the specific virtues of man's ethical life, but moral philosophers of the East and the West have set up a list of specific virtues which are almost fundamental in Ethics. This is the idea contained in the Śāmānya-dharma of the Hindu Ethics. No list could be final, but moral thinkers in the past were trying to set up what they thought the most important virtues, those most often to be striven for and most worth remembering in a slogan, or those most in need of recommendation.

Throughout the history of Ethics, the cultivation of the 'traits of character' was regarded as one of the ethical ideals. It is possible that these traits are innate but considering the nature of human nature, it appears to me that these traits or excellences of character are acquired by teaching, practice, habit, education etc.

Again, with regard to the cultivation of the traits of character, there are various moral theories. The traits or 'qualities' of character to be sought will depend upon one's ethical ideal. According to trait-egoism, we should cultivate the qualities which are conducive to one's welfare. All the self-regarding virtues belong to the theory of trait-egoism. Trait-altruism insists on other-regarding virtues which should be developed. Both these kinds of theories are trait-teleological since virtues to be sought in these are treated to be instrumental or
extrinsic in character. Of course, trait-egoism and trait-altruism are not mutually exclusive, and thus the distinction between self-regarding and other-regarding virtues breaks down. Compared to the trait-teleological view, there is a trait-deontological view which insists on the acquisition of "virtue for virtue's sake".

But one thing is certain, and that is, virtuous life is something to be acquired by practice. Virtues are to be deliberately cultivated. Virtuous life is a creative life and needs much of chiselling, moulding and weeding. It demands continuous effort and struggle against the lower passions, the root of all the vices. We have a 'fight with ourselves', as we say, before the virtuous will is triumphant. Of course, it is not possible for an ordinary man to achieve the same good qualities of saints and heroes, and to the same degree, because the prakriti of each individual is not alike. In spite of this, it appears that it is enough and quite desirable if we try to be a little like them.

Out of all the problems about the concept of 'virtue', the problem of its definition is of utmost importance. Can 'virtue' be defined? Various attempts have been made in the history of Ethics to define virtue; e.g., virtue is sometimes defined as a kind of disposition to do action. But this definition is vague and incomplete. What
is a disposition? It is a complex term which can be used in matters, for instance, relating to health. Again, the word disposition is also used in terms of 'states of temper'. If a man easily gets angry, we speak of him as having a certain disposition. Hence, virtue as a kind of disposition does not bring out the full ethical significance of 'virtue'.

Again, virtue is defined as a kind of passion. But this, too, is unsatisfactory. If passion is the genus of virtue, can we say that virtue is a kind of passion? Again, what kind of passion is it? Virtue, I think, is not a kind of passion, because passionlessness is also a virtue. Aristotle's 'golden mean' is a virtue because it avoids both the extreme passions of excess and defect. Hence, virtue is not a passion, on the contrary, it lies in between the true extreme passions. Again, if passion is the genus of virtue, animals would have virtues in the same sense men have, since animals too have passions.

Sometimes 'virtue' is defined in terms of habitual disposition. But this, too, is inadequate, because there might be an action which cannot be performed often. 'Martyrdom' for instance can be a virtue even if it occurs only once. It cannot be habitually performed. Hence, some virtues may require habitual performance, but from this one cannot conclude that all habitual dispositions are virtues. It is a hasty generalization.
Hence, sometimes 'virtue' is defined in terms of excellence of character. 'Virtue' corresponds with the Greek arete, the characteristic quality of the good character. The Greeks used 'virtue' to mean excellence and 'virtues' (in the plural) to mean the various specific excellences of character. Virtues are the good excellences of character, vices are the bad excellences of character. The former are praiseworthy and commendable, the latter are blameworthy and condemnable.

Compared with other definitions, therefore, 'virtue' as an excellence of character appears to be a more satisfactory definition. But I think that 'virtue' is good by definition. From the ethical point of view, the mere calling anything a 'virtue' is an implication that it is good. There is no proper place for an argument that 'virtue' is good, except just this argument that virtue is good by the meaning of the word 'virtue'. The place for an argument and exhortation is elsewhere; namely, where the question arises, which 'excellences' should be praised as virtues and which should not be praised as such. The answer to this will give rise to good excellences of character i.e. the virtues; and bad excellences of character, i.e. the vices. Just as 'virtue' is good by definition, similarly, 'vice' is bad by definition. Virtues are the good qualities of man's character, vices are the evil qualities of man's character. Virtues are to be deliberately
cultivated for the acquisition of good character, and vices are to be deliberately avoided because they are destructive of a good character.

Now, if virtues are the excellences of character, the question is what is their worth or value? The question is: Why should I be virtuous? What is the value of virtues? To this, there appear to be two main approaches: Instrumentalism and Intrinsicalism. The former regards virtues as having an instrumental value. All teleological theories in Ethics determine virtues as a means to an end. Opposite to this is the view of Intrinsicalism which regards the intrinsic value, or the inner worth of the virtues. This is the deontological view which advocates the view "virtue for virtue's sake". Both these views have something important to say, but yet a reconciliation is possible between them. These two views need not be necessarily kept at opposite poles. There can be no doubt that in the primitive stage of the evolution of morality, the value of virtues is largely instrumental. But are these merely instrumental? The moral sense of the primitive peoples seems to indicate that they also have an immediate and unaffected joy in character or goodness for its own sake. Honesty, valour, loyalty, sincerity, truthfulness, etc. seem to be valued for their own sake. And this is explained on a psychological level. Just as we admire the skill of an artist for its own sake, similarly we come to admire
man's courage or self-sacrifice quite apart from the considerations of its effects. But I think that this psychological explanation does not go to the root of the matter. The real reason why we value the virtues for their own sake is that they are forms of self-realization, which is not only an intrinsic good but the highest good.

Urban in his 'Fundamentals of Ethics' says that the intrinsic value of virtues is esthetic and not ethical, because all value is ultimately esthetic. But it appears that the name matters little. The important thing is the recognition of the justification of the intrinsic value of virtues as such, besides their instrumental character. Mere instrumental approach devalues the ethical value of the virtues of man's life.

We have said that 'virtue' is a fundamental quality of character, and virtues are its various specifications. The various virtues are the expressions of character in actual conduct. Virtues ought to be expressed in overt actions. If virtues are not expressed or seen in outward conduct, it would be ethically insignificant. Theory and practice, at least in the field of Ethics, should go hand-in-hand. The discrepancy between them is ethically undesirable.

But I think that even though virtues ought to be expressed in overt actions, yet, ultimately, it is character
that is valued when valued morally. It reveals the goodness of the character rather than merely the rightness of an action. Virtues cannot be understood in vacuum, but ultimately it is character which should be valued in terms of virtues, which are also sometimes called 'character-values'. Virtues alone, therefore, may determine the inner and the ethical worth of man's character.

Sometimes a question about human nature is raised in terms of virtue or vice. Are men essentially virtuous or vicious? Different possible approaches are there. Each of the views has something important to state e.g. Moral optimism, moral pessimism, moral neutralism, moral dualism and moral realism—all these views have some grain of truth in them. However, moral neutralism appears to me to be the adequate view which justifies the idea that virtues are to be acquired. This appears to be a psychological human experience. A man becomes virtuous or vicious according to the impact of the Samskaras he receives. And if we accept this view, only then and then there is a scope for purposeful building of character.

It is in this sense one can justify the importance of the value of education. Proper education can play a great part in turning men from evil towards good. The role of education is the total development of human personality, the total character of men. Education and
character-building are intimately connected. Moral bankruptcy is due to lack of right education.

Education is one of the methods of moulding man's character. There are other methods also. Sometimes children should be told the ideal stories of great men, sages and saints, scientists and men of literature and so on. Psychologically this may develop at least a desire in children to be ideal persons, and may develop a pro-attitude towards truthfulness, honesty, fairness, modesty, kindness and so on. 'Prayer' in the educational institutions can also play a great part in moulding the lives of the children.

With regard to the number of virtues some ethical thinkers have advocated the doctrine of pluralism of virtues, but I think that no list ever formed can be accepted as complete. Hence, changing social conditions make it difficult to put forward a satisfactory list of virtues. Virtues change from age to age, or from person to person.

But if a complete list is not possible, can we not classify virtues based on different principles of classification? Virtues have been classified according to various principles of classification; e.g. self-regarding and other-regarding virtues. This is one of the historical attempts at the classification of virtues, but this kind of classification is unsatisfactory for various reasons.
Firstly, these two kinds of virtues are not mutually exclusive, they can be reconciled in some forms of virtue. Hence, the distinction between them is artificial, and the relation is natural. Man is a social animal, and hence cannot realize his own nature unless he devotes himself to the common good of the community. Again, these virtues belong to the whole man, and hence should live in unity and co-operation, rather than in diversity and competition.

Again, virtues have been classified into intellectual and moral. It is said that the former are acquired through learning and the latter through practice.

But such a view, on reflection, appears to be incorrect. Habituation, I think, is also necessary in intellectual virtues, and learning or instruction is also necessary in moral virtues. Even in moral virtues, the trainer must instruct the person.

Sometimes moral virtues are recognized as practical virtues, while intellectual virtues as theoretical virtues. This is, I think, one of the reasons because of which modern ethics appears to be more pragmatic rather than theoretical. But such kind of over-emphasis on practical virtues is highly undesirable. Hindu Ethics tries to reconcile the intellectual or theoretical virtues and moral or practical virtues in terms of the concept of 'Purugārtha'. The concept of 'Purugārtha' signifies an integrity of
Virtues, again, have been classified into Positive and Negative, as they undertake a definite course of action or as they lead us to desist from certain actions. Patañjali in his 'Aṣṭāṅga Yoga' gives us a list of Positive and Negative virtues.

But the above classification appears to be faulty in the sense that it depends on how we interpret a particular virtue, e.g. according to the above definition, non-violence, because of the prefix 'non' is a negative virtue; but can it not be interpreted positively? Literally, it is a negative virtue, but really it is a positive virtue which is based on a spirit of tenderness and a goodwill to all creatures. The positive import of 'non-violence' is beautifully brought out by Śāneśvara in his celebrated Śāneśvarī. Hence, positively, non-violence stands for...
love, according to Mahatma Gandhi, and stands for an attitude of seeking the good of all creatures (Bhūtahītatva). Like non-violence, non-stealing (Asteya), restraint of acquisitiveness (Aparigraha) and many others can be interpreted positively, and not necessarily negatively as such. Hence, the classification of virtues into positive and negative appears to be quite superfluous.

Virtues have also been classified into Primary and Secondary, or cardinal and subaltern. This is treated to be the most logical division because only in this way it would be possible to avoid illogical divisions. Plato's cardinal virtues are well-known in the history of Greek Ethics.

The above are the so-called classifications of virtues. But no classification appears to be perfectly satisfactory. In the words of N. Hartmann, any classification of virtues is obviously arbitrary and artificial. And, therefore, I think that the connection of the several virtues is so intimate owing to the unity of character that we can deduce all the virtues from any one of them. Hence, instead of classifying virtues, an attempt could be made for making a gradation of virtues.

The gradation of virtues may be shown to consist in the following table:

(i) Self-regarding;
(ii) Other-regarding;
(iii) God-regarding.
And this leads us ultimately to the classification of virtues into:

(i) **Secular**
(ii) **Religious**

Ethics may begin on secular basis but it should culminate into spiritualism. Man is not merely body or mind, but spirit as well. In the spiritual life alone, the conflict between the individual and social virtues could be reconciled and transcended. It is in this sense Gurudev R. D. Ranege says that super-moralism is nearer to moralism than to anti-moralism.

According to secular Ethics, those actions are virtuous which promote well-being in this very world. Hedonistic Ethics, Pragmatic Ethics, Utilitarianistic Ethics, Rationalistic Ethics, Humanistic Ethics, and Democratic Ethics, are different forms of secular Ethics. And the virtues under each of the above ethical theory are really needed in our interdependent world i.e. self-control, courage, wisdom, justice, brotherly love and many other virtues as these are as valuable as ever.

But a mere secular justification of Ethics may not enable man to realize his own nature. Ethical ideal must ultimately be dissolved into a kind of spiritual realization. The truly good man is the religious man who is profoundly moral, and yet much more than merely moral in the secular sense.
But this will lead us to the question: Is the ultimate goal transcending virtues and vices? If the answer is in the affirmative, then morality will not have any place in transcendentalism, which is said to be above all kinds of dualism. But this is not so. Even in spiritualism, secular virtues can be expressed by the devotee but without any individual-consciousness, or social-consciousness, but rather with God-consciousness. Śaṅkara, in his Aparokṣānu-bhūti, has shown beautifully how the yogic virtues themselves shine with the new lustre of Brahmanic devotion and Brahmanic knowledge. So we can say, in general, that though the Brahman goes beyond morality and that though the moral life can never be a substitute for the spiritual life, the reflection of the Over-good can be better found in the ethical good than in anything else. Hence, super-moralism is nearer to moralism than to a-moralism or anti-moralism.

The traditional Indian philosophical systems regard Mokṣa as the summum bonum of life, with the only exception of the Cārvāka system. Cārvāka's views about virtues are found to be similar to the cyrenaics and hedonistic thinkers of the West. Almost all the systems unanimously agree about the importance of moral virtues as a pre-condition for self-realization. The concept of 'Nirvāṇa' in Buddhism, the concept of 'Tīrthaṅkara' in Jainism, 'Kaivalya' in Sāmkhya, 'Brahmajñāna' in Vedānta pre-suppose a moral
preparation in terms of the various virtues as such. Hence, practice of virtues might be treated as a method of spiritual life. The 'Yama and Niyama' of the Yoga system and the 'Samadamiṣṭatka' of the Vedānta school make the aspirant ethically prepared for spiritual life. Hence, spiritualism presupposes and transcends Ethics. The various virtues are the steps of the ladder towards spiritualism.

Last, but not the least, is the analysis of virtues in the Ethics of the Bhagavadgītā. And such an analysis gives rise to important metaphysical questions about virtues; e.g. is there any relation between Ethics and spiritualism? does the ultimate goal transcend virtues? what is the worth of virtues in spiritualism? and so on. The following analysis is based on the Bhagavadgītā's contribution to the ethical value of virtues in spiritualism.

The discussion of the virtues is scattered over different chapters, such as the 12th chapter, the 13th chapter, the 16th chapter and finally in the 18th chapter of the Bhagavadgītā.

The Bhagavadgītā classifies virtues into this-worldly (laukika) and other-worldly (pārlaukika), which are sometimes known to be secular and religious respectively. Ethics may begin on a secular level, but it must culminate into spiritualism. St. Augustine in the West was the first to recognize the great Christian truth that it is man's
relation to God that gives unity to moral life. Kant and Bradley also advocated Ethics on metaphysical basis.

According to spiritualism, the value of virtues is instrumental. Practice of virtues was taken to be a right method for spiritual experience. Virtues are those divine qualities which are conducive to spiritual experience. The virtues of 'Sthitaprajña' (Bhagavadgītā, Chapt. 2), the virtues of the 'devotee' (Bhagavadgītā, Chap. 9, 12), the virtues of the 'Jñāni' (Bhagavadgītā, Chap. 13) and the virtues of the 'Divine heritage' (Bhagavadgītā, Chap. 16) are the virtues which are essential for Ātma-jñāna.

According to the Bhagavadgītā, Virtues are sometimes treated to be the qualities of the aspirant (Śādhaka laksanās), and sometimes to be the qualities of the liberated self (Siddha laksanās). The former are means to the latter and are contained in the latter. This is based on the view that 'the end is contained in the means'.

Compared to the West, the Bhagavadgītā's analysis of 'vices', too, appears to be outstanding and classical in the history of the Indian philosophical literature. 'What is the origin of 'vice'?' was the question of Arjuna to Śrīkṛṣṇa, the author of the Bhagavadgītā. In answer to this question, Śrīkṛṣṇa says, "this is craving, this is wrath, born of the mode of passion, all devouring and most sinful" (Bhagavadgītā, 3/36). Desire and anger (Kāma and
Krodha) are the roots of all the vices of human life. These are man's real enemies. All these enemies are to be controlled by Viyeka, Vairagya and Abhyasa. Vicious persons cannot attain to the supreme, for their mind and will are not instruments of the 'spirit' but of the ego.

Devotion to God is the cardinal virtue according to the Bhagavadgita. Un-Godliness is the root of all the vices, and Godliness is the root of all the virtues. God-love is the central virtue in which are focussed all the virtues, e.g. Maitri, Karuna, Samata, Santosha, Yama, Sauca, Asanga, and Shraddha are the various manifestations of devotion, the source of all virtues. The Bhagavadgita recommends the above virtues to eradicate the evils of the world for the experience of inner peace (Santi) which is obtainable through God-realization.

True devotion is beyond all the distinctions of caste, colour and creed of the devotee. What matters is the sincere feeling of devotion and uncompromising love for God. One who surrenders himself to Him sincerely and without personal reservation or interest, even if he is an evil-doer (duracari), meets Him, as particles of salt dissolve in the ocean. The real devotee of His Will never perishes. For God-realization, Jnanesvara prescribes a long list of virtues under the name of Divine heritage; and classifies virtues mainly into four kinds; e.g.,

(i) Negative virtues;
(ii) Individual virtues;
(iii) Social virtues; and
(iv) Spiritual virtues.

Of course, from the logical point of view, even this classification appears to be illogical because it suffers from the fallacies of too wide and too narrow definitions. But his analysis of virtues has become classical and outstanding in the ethical thoughts of the saints of Maharashtra. He gives us a psychological analysis; e.g. according to him, 'Ātmanvinigraha' must culminate into meditation (dhyāna), non-attachment (Ānasakti) requires the practice of vows (Vratas), 'indriyanigraha' (sense-control) is not possible without an attitude of Vairāgya (renunciation), and real 'sānti' (inner peace) cannot be attained without Ātmājñāna. All these virtues are psychologically important for the Divine Happiness.

In brief, a mere secular justification of Ethics may not make man truly religious. The truly good man is the religious man who is profoundly moral, and yet much more than mere moral in the secular sense. Secular Ethics, in one form or the other, emphasizes hedonistic, utilitarianistic, rationalistic, relativistic, humanistic, democratic or communistic approaches towards Ethics. All these are valuable, and co-operativeness, tolerance, openmindedness are some of the secular virtues which are especially needed in our interdependent world. But a mere secular point of
view is not enough. Ethical life (which is a virtuous life) ought to culminate into spiritualism. Moral life gets its real ethical zeal if it is oriented to spiritual life. The best moral life is truly religious in character. The lustre of the truly religious life is fearlessness and truth (abhayam and satyam). Unless the moral being of a person is properly moulded, there can hardly be any uplift of the spiritual side of life. There may be examples where a man has risen to the great spiritual heights without undergoing strict ethical discipline. But this, I think, is only an exception, which proves the rule.

The concept of 'virtue', in relation to other important ethical concepts, occupies one of the significant problems in the study of Ethics as a theory of virtues. Ethics has been interpreted variously in terms of duty, right, value and so on. But it appears that Ethics may be studied essentially as a theory of virtues. All other matters, though of theoretic and academic interest are of secondary importance from the point of view of the central subject-matter of the greatest ethical importance, namely virtues.

Good traits of character are the virtues, and bad traits of character are the vices. Reference to virtues and their opposites i.e. the vices is generally found in the important religions of the world. Though good character is
made of virtues and bad character of vices, we are primarily interested in understanding the nature of virtues and it is only by negative implication that we come to know of vices.

In the history of Ethics, there had been various approaches to the nature of virtue and vice. But all these approaches determine the nature of virtue and vice on an objective and subjective level; e.g., according to Formalism and Intuitionism good motive and voice of conscience respectively determine virtue and vice. Actions done with good motives are virtuous and done with bad motives are vicious. But this is illogical. It suffers from the fallacy of petitio principii. Again, what certainty is there that the overt action and the inner attitude will always have one-one-correspondence? Similarly, the voice of conscience is merely a state of mind which is subject to transformation. What is virtuous according to one's conscience is considered otherwise by another's. Hence, both these approaches being merely subjective are unreliable.

According to objectivism, virtuous action is that which gives satisfactory or beneficial results; vicious action is known by its injurious results. But this, too, appears to be unsatisfactory. What gives satisfaction to one may not give the same to others. The notion of benefit and joy vary according to place, temperament, age, mood, mental development and the like. Moreover, we have no
capacity to determine how, where, why, when and how much our actions will bear fruit.

Some conclude that actions done without self-interest as virtuous. But this is simply absurd. How can an individual be completely free from self-interest, self-preservation, self-development and self-enjoyment? Without these, human life would be impossible. This might be possible on a transcendental level, but not on the secular level.

Hence, all these approaches are beset with logical as well as practical difficulties. According to me, the radical defect in all these approaches is the fact that all these refer to the overt actions rather than the inner worth of human character. To be virtuous requires an inner sanction. The spring of virtue is intrinsic and has an inner worth.

Coming to the relation between duty and virtue or right and virtue, it can be said that right and duty both imply each other and are relative from the social point of view, and sometimes duties themselves, or duties and rights come in conflict giving rise to a legal or social crisis. In order to reduce these crises human beings take the help of courts, police, laws etc. Hence, so long as rights and duties will conflict, human society cannot attain righteousness. Rights and duties are external determinants or measures of man's conduct. These refer to the extrinsic and outer worth of man's conduct, while virtues alone
determine or measure the real ethical worth of man's inner character. To be virtuous is ethically more valuable than to be dutiful or right in social actions. The latter are determined by external sanctions, the former is determined by an inner sanction. Hence, virtue is central to Ethics, rather than duty or right.

Again, how could virtue be distinguished from law? The word 'law' is ambiguous and has various forms such as political laws, social laws, divine laws, natural laws, economic laws, moral laws and so on.

Moral laws are different from the natural laws. Natural laws cannot be violated and are descriptive in character. They state what actually happens. Moral laws can be violated; and are prescriptive in character. They state what ought to happen.

Political laws can be changed and violated, they are of the form of must. In moral laws there is no force. Political laws are obligatory, moral laws are voluntary. Legally, an action is right if it is based on the legal sanction, wrong, if otherwise. But what is legally right, may not be morally good, and what is legally wrong may sometimes, be morally good. Mahātmā Gāndhi's non-violent non-cooperation may be legally wrong, being against the law of the State, but morally good. To abide by the laws of the State is a virtue, but if the laws are unjust or 'lawless' these should be removed through democratic ways.
Again, laws themselves presuppose a higher standard. They are also the objects of moral judgement. Law must have an ethical basis. We have said that to obey the laws of the State is a virtue. But this does not exhaust virtuous life. Virtue may surpass the laws of the State. There is an uncommon virtue in doing more than our duties or what the State expects. Hence, the supremacy of 'virtue' over duty and law.

Again, how could virtues be related with values? Axiology studies the nature of values. Axiologists have given a table of values; e.g. economic values, bodily values, values of recreation, values of association and so on. Out of these, character-values are ethically more important than others. These character-values are the virtues of man's life.

Again, virtues are explained in terms of their worth, their instrumental or intrinsic worth. Teleological theories support the instrumental worth of virtues, deontologists support the intrinsic worth of virtues. If virtues are ends in themselves, argue the teleologists, then the practice of virtues would be meaningless. Every single virtue can be shown to draw its strength and sacredness from some primary need of life.

Such a view is generally held to be most practical because it satisfies the immediate needs of the individuals.
Truthfulness is prized because there are important truths to speak, because it makes a vast difference in human relations, whether thoughts are represented as they are, or are distorted out of all semblance to reality. Were it not for this fact, truth-speaking would be just meaningless.

But I think the above view cannot be justified from the ethical point of view. Instrumentalism cannot be justified by rejecting the inner worth of virtues. There are some traits of character the value of which is intrinsic. This is the idea contained in the concept of 'Samānya dharma' of Hindu Ethics. Manuṣmṛti enumerates ahimsā, satya, asteya, śauca and indriyanigraha as the universal and intrinsic virtues vouchsafed to us believing in the Vedic view of life. How can the ethical values of these be determined by circumstances? Pragmatic Ethics is not Ethics in the real sense of the term.

Ultimately, the object of the present work is to study critically the concept of virtue in different ethical theories. Every ethical system has its own treatment of virtues corresponding to its specific ethical ideal. Yet, one thing is certain, that is, ultimately the inquiry of the ethical system must result in giving us an idea of its ethical ideal which is worthy of realization and what is not so, so that we come to know what kind of virtues are considered in question. Whatever form of the ethical ideal may be recognized by any ethical system, some virtues
consistently following from that ideal will have to be regarded as worth acquiring in that specific system. Hence, the nature and the number of virtues will be obviously different from system to system.

With regard to the classification of ethical theories, there is no one easy way of classification. Ethical systems have been classified into Cognitive and Non-cognitive; or into Naturalistic, Intuitionistic and Metaphysical; or into Axiological and Deontological. Our effort, however, at present will be to bring out the nature of virtues in different ethical systems; and hence the problem about the classification of ethical systems becomes just a secondary one. All the systems are unanimous on the practical issues; e.g., the systems agree in not to steal, not to lie, not to injure, to be kind, benevolent etc. But these actions are justified on different principles in different ethical systems.

The different ethical systems, except ethical scepticism, have something important to state in their approach in determining the nature of virtues. Any ethical theory is preferable in value to any form of scepticism, because an utterly sceptical attitude ends in epistemological confusion, moral anarchy and psychological frustration. Scepticism should begin with doubt, but should not end in doubt, otherwise it becomes self-contradictory and self-destructive. Hence, the truth in the utterances of the
Bhagavadgītā: 'the man, who is of a doubting nature, perishes' (Bhagavadgītā; IV.40); 'the man of faith attains knowledge' (Bhagavadgītā; IV.39).

The hedonistic or the utilitarian system emphasizes the value of virtues in their being useful for getting pleasure, either to oneself or to others. Both these ethical systems judge virtuous actions by their consequences. Virtuous actions are pleasurable and hence to be practised; vicious actions are painful and hence to be avoided. Ethics, according to these systems, is a science as well as an art of conduct, and not of 'character'. The act is not virtuous because performed by a good man, nor vicious because performed by a bad man. Only pleasure or pain determine what is virtuous or vicious respectively. Virtuous character is good, but it cannot be the standard of human actions.

But these views, it appears, are relative in the sense that what gives pleasure to one may not give pleasure to others. How can, then, it be the standard of morality? Again, these systems regard the value of virtues as merely instrumental. This relative or instrumental value of virtues is usually highly exaggerated. These theories determine the instrumentalistic and external nature of virtues rather than their intrinsic and inner worth. These theories engage themselves with conduct which is mainly an external expression of character. These theories interpret 'virtue' in terms of the rightness of an action and not in
terms of the goodness of a person.

Coming to Rationalism (also known as Formalism), 'reason' has been given a supreme place in human constitution. Formalistic Ethics and Moral-sense Ethics have striking differences. Formalists regard 'virtue' which consists in following "duty for duty's sake". This implies that 'virtue' is to be followed without any reference to an external end. Virtue is to be followed categorically and not hypothetically—a striking difference between Hedonistic and Formalistic account of virtue.

However, the Kantian principle of virtue does not cover the whole range of virtuous life. Virtue may consist in following one's duties unconditionally. But, virtue may consist even in some uncommon duties which do not belong to a specific class as such. This is the concept of 'Samānyadharma'. From this it follows that 'virtue' may surpass 'duty'. One may rise above one's specific duties. Hence, it is ethically desirable—and more valuable to do something which is not enjoined as a duty and yet commendable and ethically meritorious.

Besides this, there is so much criticism against Kant's Ethics; e.g., it is formalistic, negativistic, rigorous, and so on. All this criticism is traditional or historical and hence I do not take this for a critical examination. However, Kantian concept of 'Categorical Imperative' and the ethical principle "duty for duty's sake"
—both these thoughts do not appear to be Kant's original contributions. He simply appears to have restated them; e.g., the source of Kant's Categorical Imperative appears to be in the Christian 'Will of God', the principle of 'Divine sanction' in Christian Ethics. Again, there is a striking parallelism between Kantian and the Bhagavadgītā's account of "duty for duty's sake". (Bhagavadgītā; 2/47, 6/18, 9/18.) However, Bhagavadgītā's analysis of 'Categorical Imperative' and "duty for duty's sake" appears to be outstanding and classical in the history of Hindu Ethico-Religious thought.

Considering the ethical limitations of Hedonism and Rationalism, an attempt was made to reconcile the claims of Hedonism and Rationalism. This is the perfectionists' view, which is variously known as Perfectionism, Eudaemonism, Energism, or Ethical Idealism. According to this view, temperance and wisdom, and virtues following from them will reconcile the extreme claims of Hedonism and Rationalism. This is substantially the view of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, Neo-Hegelians, Green, Caird, Dewey, D'Arcy, Mackenzie, Muirhead, James Seth, Paulsen and so on.

According to Perfectionism, virtue consists in following those actions which are conducive to the development of the total 'self'—the sentient and the rational excellences of human personality. Hence, Perfectionism reconciles sensualistic and rationalistic virtues, egoistic
and altruistic virtues, virtues under asceticism and epicurianism or virtues under rigorism and hedonism.

But, what is the nature of 'self'? There are different views on this. However H. W. Wright's account of 'self' appears to be satisfactory. According to him, the 'self' is composed of the individual self, the social self and the universal self, and emphasizes the harmonious inter-relation between self-regarding, other-regarding and God-regarding virtues. The first two kinds of virtues ought to culminate into spiritualism so that the claims of morality and religion are brought into perfect harmony. Good character is an organic unity of these various virtues. But how is this perfection to be attained? There is bound to be a time interval between initiation and realization. It is a gradual process. Moral life gets its real ethical zeal if it is oriented to spiritual life. The best moral life is truly religious in character. This is the real perfection in which the psychological, ethical, social and mystical excellences of 'self' are fully realized.

Hence, Perfectionism appears to be the most satisfactory of the theories of virtue because it incorporates into itself the elements of truth that are in the rival theories of virtues.

Again, according to Intuitionism, virtue-words are not the objects of sense-perception, nor are to be known by
conscious reasoning. Virtue-words are the objects of direct insight. Virtues, being the qualities of character, are not to be perceived, rather to be conceived intuitively. The various forms of Intuitionism, such as Epistemological, Metaphysical, ethical and so on, unanimously agree in one thing: that man has a certain 'faculty', neither sensory nor rationalistic which is capable of apprehending the reality of virtues directly.

Moore believes that 'virtue' cannot be defined, being a 'simple' concept. It is not a pseudo-concept, as logical positivists used to hold. But H. A. Prichard and David Ross wanted to make 'intuition' do more work than Moore had assigned to it. To the question, "Why should I be virtuous?" he, almost like Kant, gives an deontological answer that it is to be followed categorically, unconditionally. This is the self-evident character of virtue.

But can virtues always be consistent with the voice of intuition? Not necessarily. What is deemed virtuous by one's intuition is considered otherwise by another's. Hence, it is unsafe to rely upon the voice of intuition as final in determining the nature of virtue and vice. In fact, no section of human society leaves the question of virtue and vice to the uncertain dictates of individual intuition.

Again, the power of intuition is not universally present in all individuals. There is always a difference of degree. If we could discover the fundamental virtues
readily accepted by all rational beings, then only the 
determination of virtue and vice by intuition could be 
possible. But this is far from the truth.

Last, but not the least, the problem about the 
prominent historical theories of virtue occupies an important 
place in the history of Western moral philosophy. These 
theories have been divided into three parts for the sake 
of convenience; e.g., Theories of virtue during Greek 
Ethics, theories of virtue during Medieval Ethics and 
theories of virtue in Modern Ethics.

It is possible to trace the concept of 'virtue' in, 
the Ethical thoughts of pre-Socratic moral philosophers. 
According to Stoics virtuous life is good in itself, and 
hence possesses an intrinsic value; while Epicureans 
believed in the extrinsic value of virtues. We have said 
etlier that both these views are one-sided. Again, 
Epicureanism does not resemble the hedonism of utilitarians, 
the difference being Epicurus' obsession with pain. His 
Ethics differs from the Ethics of Aristipus and Cyrenaics. 
He believed in pleasures which we experience from ataraxia 
i.e. from tranquillity. Pleasures should be sought with 
discrimination. Every pleasure is not worthy of choice. 
Hence, one should desire pleasures which are desirable and 
not those which are desired. And this gives rise to relativistic Ethics, in which prudence ensues every virtue. 
Socrates appears to have revolted against extreme relati-
vistic attitude and expressed his theory of virtue in three propositions; e.g., (i) Virtue is knowledge (of the good), (ii) Virtue is one and (iii) Virtue is teachable. All these propositions have been criticized to be quite unpsychological. But was Socrates, the greatest of all the Greek philosophers, ignorant about the psychology of human nature? Certainly not. He was not a dreamer, but was a seer. If the paths towards 'virtue' were simple and straight, Socrates would simply have got his system of virtue carved in stone and would have exposed it to the public gaze in some corner stone of the streets of Athens, so that whoever caught sight of it might straight practise it alone. For him, to know was to act, and not let slip. The so-called paradox raised by critics is not a genuine paradox. Hence, his theory of virtue is not a genuine contradiction. Hence, Socratic teaching centred round virtuous life.

Again, Plato's conception of Cardinal virtues has become classical. His list of virtues appears to be simple. Like Socrates, Plato, too, believes in the real unity and the apparent diversity of virtues.

The original important treatise of Aristotle—Nicomachean Ethics—extensively deals with virtues. He defines virtue which consists in 'The mean between the two extremes'. This is such a practical kind of morality that it creates an impression that he has not to give any new theory of virtue as such. But this is not so. He was the
first to approach the problem of virtue from purely the quantitative point of view. Again, his concept of 'mean' is not just a mathematical mean which can be computed simply. His 'mean' is an ethical mean which is quite relative to circumstance, time, person and so on; e.g., courage is a virtue, but more courage is required of a soldier than a shopkeeper, the courage of the soldier is nearer to rashness than that of the shopkeeper. Again, his theory of virtue can be interpreted in two ways: positively and negatively. Interpreted positively, it means that virtue exists between the two extremes; interpreted negatively it means 'virtue' is that which is not an extreme (i.e. that which is not too much nor too little).

Critics of Aristotle often point out that his theory of 'virtue' is based on 'manners' of people; his list of virtues also appears to be unnecessarily widened. Again, some important virtues, e.g., benevolence does not appear in his 'Nicomachean Ethics'. On the contrary, the Ethics of Buddhism, Jainism and Christianity appears to be oriented in benevolence, faith, love and charity. In spite of these limitations, Aristotle's doctrine has one merit. The inclusion of friendship in Nicomachean Ethics is certainly a novel experiment which no pre-Aristotle thinker had thought over. His 'mean' may not have a universal application, still it must be granted that his theory has some application to a wide range of virtues.
In the Medieval period Christian saints emphasized virtues—love, faith, hope, charity and so on. Besides these, the Christian saints had also accepted the four Platonic virtues—prudence, fortitude, temperance and justice. Compared with Plato's theory of virtue, Christian saints developed Ethics on a theological basis. Faith, hope and love refer to God and hence are religious virtues.

There is a striking similarity between Christian Ethics and Bhagavadgītā's Ethics with regard to the origin of vices. Both believe in passion, desire or lust as the source of all vices. Both believe that the real enemy of man is 'desire and anger'. But Bhagavadgītā's analysis of vices and virtues has become classical in the history of Hindu thought. Again, both believe in love as the highest virtue; devotion or love of God is the source of all virtues. In fact, even the four cardinal virtues are in a sense four aspects of one and the same virtue, viz. love. Again, there is a striking similarity between Christian and Hindu virtues, e.g. 'Thou shalt not kill' corresponds with ahīṃsā, 'thou shalt not commit adultery' corresponds with brahmacarya, 'thou shalt not steal' with asteya, 'thou shalt not bear false witness' with satya, 'thou shalt not covet' with the Hindu concept of aparigraha, justice corresponds with the Hindu concept of bhūtahītatva (good of all creatures) and so on.

In comparison with Greek and Medieval Ethics, modern
works on Ethics appear to be unnecessarily too dry. There does not appear to be any genuine love for a virtuous life or for virtues themselves. Among modern writers, Nicolii Hartmann has made an extensive analysis of virtues. Kant's theory of virtue appears to be too formal, and his concept of duty may be reduced to the concept of virtue by saying that virtue consists in following one's duty. But merely doing one's duty, because it is duty, is not enough. Doing duties does not exhaust virtuous life. Duties may be surpassed. And hence the primacy of 'virtue' over 'duty'.

Coming to F. Nietzsche's theory of virtue, which is based on ethical evolutionism or naturalism, virtues are treated as those traits of character which enable one to survive in the struggle for existence. This gives rise to virtues under master-morality and slave-morality. Courage, self-reliance, mastery, creative leadership belong to the former kind of morality; and humility, sympathy, kindness to the latter. But Nietzsche does not appear to be the enemy of moral virtues, or a subjectivist or relativist in its extreme form. However, his views appear to be unpsychological. His views about human virtues are based on a faulty analysis of human nature. Again, can might be the standard of right? His virtues stem from his Ethics of power which promote the law of the jungle, namely, the law of tooth and claw which may prove satisfactory for animals but not for human beings.
Coming to humanistic theory of virtue, an emphasis is put on the value or dignity of man. Humanism is an ambiguous term, yet any form of humanism advocates an interest in and focus upon human welfare, here and now, not allowing any spiritual virtues. Virtues, according to Humanism, arise out of the needs of human life, and hence are created and not infused by God, as Christian saints used to believe.

But we are not really human if we do not feel that we are related to something that transcends the finite, limited, conditional and relative as such. The roots of man's being are in the unseen and eternal and his destiny is not limited to the duration of his life on earth. The whole problem is whether any intensity in virtuous life could be seen if the spiritual constitution of man and the universe is not recognized. Hence, religious Ethics should be the basis of humanistic virtues.

Coming to the emotivistic theory of virtues, the whole discussion appears to be too dry. There does not appear to be a genuine love for good life. According to Emotivistic theory of virtue, virtue-statements are psychological statements rather than rational. These express one's emotions—favourable or unfavourable. Again, virtue-words have no cognitive meaning. But is this kind of analysis of 'virtue' ethically satisfactory? Emotivistic analysis of virtues has got its own limitations beyond
which it cannot go. Virtue-problems are not only the problems of language, wherein clarification is necessary but not enough. Virtue-words may be emotive and hence subjective in character, but there must be some objective reason for the subjective attitude. Take the two statements, 'I like this particular virtue' and 'I approve of this particular virtue'; the former is subjective while the latter is not. Hence, the emotivists should make a distinction between ethical language and the purely emotive language in interpreting the nature of virtue-words. If virtues are merely 'emotive' in character, the table of virtues would fluctuate, behaviour norms would be reduced to personal caprice, ethical education would be impossible, moral training would not make sense and evil doers would be worth as much as the honest and virtuous ones.

Lastly, coming to Existentialistic theory of virtues, man begins his life without any kind of virtuous or vicious nature. He becomes virtuous or vicious, as the case may be. Man is free to become virtuous or vicious. Existentialists do not give any general theory of virtue. They try to find out the specific virtues for the individual in his concrete situation. It rejects the theological basis of virtuous life. All virtues are man-made. But the difficulty in this is: if each man decides for himself the virtues required in the specific situation, this will lead to complete relativism and an absolutely unrestrained individualism which is ethically undesirable.