

## PHILOSOPHY, EDUCATION AND THE QUALITY OF LIFE

### I

#### **Philosophy and Social Involvement**

In contemporary India philosophers are often exhorted by some non-philosophers as well as by some of their co-professionals to take interest in social or practical affairs of the country, obviously implying the accusation that they do not, or do not as much as, or in the manner in which, they should. The former are generally people holding positions of political or beaurocratic influence, who have not, and perhaps are not expected to have, tried to acquaint themselves with any kind of serious philosophizing. This may not be true of the latter. But it is almost always true of them that they have not actively, or for a long period of time, engaged themselves in philosophical studies or research. But both the groups of exhortationists are either unclear, or hold some unrealistic view, about what exactly a philosopher should do to get himself honourably acquitted. That is why their exhortation does not give any helpful guidance, even to him who takes it seriously, as to what he should do, as a philosopher, with regard to social affairs in general, or with regard to some specific one.

It does not, however, mean that the accusation is totally baseless. An accusation may be based on some real lapse committed by the accused, though the accuser is not able to properly identify it, or to articulate what the latter should do to compensate for it. The above accusation does seem to me to be largely justified. Excepting a few, the competent, hard core, contemporary Indian philosophers have not written on issues of social or practical relevance. The result is that there is a great dearth of good philosophical

works in such areas as applied ethics, professional ethics, and social and political philosophy. Some incompetent ones, or some of those who do not possess professional expertise in any hard core area of philosophy, have. They have, because they think, which is farthest from the truth, that these issues are the easiest ones to write on, or that to write on them one does not have to school himself rigorously in any sort of technical philosophizing. Their writings may fulfil some degree, or promotional, requirement of theirs, but certainly not the need for good philosophizing on social or practical problems.

What sort of interest in social affairs would be a *philosophical* interest, in which particular way one should take interest in them *in virtue of his being a philosopher*, in contrast with his being, say, the chairman of a flood-relief committee, is itself an important philosophical question. To have even a reasonably acceptable answer to it would require a great deal of philosophizing, and would in no way be an easy matter. Therefore, we need not be surprised if an exhortationist does not have it. To go deeper into this question would require a detailed discussion about the nature of philosophizing relevant, or pertaining, to social issues, or social living in general. This would mean discussing the nature of philosophizing done in such areas as applied ethics, social ethics, social philosophy, political philosophy etc. This cannot be done with any amount of fairness within the limits of this essay. I shall, therefore, make only a few remarks, which hopefully would give at least a working idea, clear enough for the present purpose, of what can be called a philosophical concern with social affairs.

There are several things one may do to exhibit his interest in social affairs. For example, he may organize a movement to protest against deforestation, or against rigging in political elections. These things he can do without having any philosophy in his head, and certainly without having any ability to do philosophy creatively. He may even do them more effectively than a competent philosopher. If the latter ever does any such thing equally effectively, it would not, or need not, mean that he has done it *because* he is a competent philosopher. Again, if they are things which any citizen ought to take interest in, the philosopher also ought to, but not because he is a philosopher; rather, because he is also a citizen.

There is another, not so directly an active, way to be involved in social affairs. For example one may write on some current social issue of importance in a persuasive manner to attract people's attention, to create public opinion for or against it. This is what a good, professionally conscientious, journalist does, or ought to do. But in such ventures even the ablest philosopher may not compete with him. And, when he does not, or does not want to, we cannot accuse him of being, as a philosopher, incompetent, or a derelict in the performance of a duty. If, on the other hand, he fares as well as, or better than, an able journalist, his success would be an evidence for, or a result of, his journalistic, and not his philosophical, competence. All this is so because philosophical competence and journalistic competence are different types of competences, though it is not impossible that a certain individual possesses both.

It does not, however, follow from the above that there is no way in which a philosopher, as a philosopher, can take interest in social or practical affairs. Philosophy being a predominantly cognitive inquiry, his concern with social affairs or problems has to be predominantly cognitive. He would, for example, be exhibiting his *philosophical interest* by logically analyzing in a critical and comprehensive manner a matter or issue of social importance and bringing out some of its not-so-clear conceptual components, its relationship with some other issue or issues, the assumption or assumptions which an actual or proposed solution makes, or which an appropriate solution should make, the viability of some of these assumptions, the coherence or incoherence of a solution with the general social ethos, etc., etc. He would, in effect, be presenting, and sometimes drawing, a conceptual map of the social reality, or of a sector of it, a map more or less comprehensive, depending on the area or areas to which the issues, studied by him, belong. He would, in a sense, be concerned with the human phenomenon of social living.

Social living is living in an actual social world constituted by a complicated network of (social) relationships. But it is not just that. It also comprises a number of policies, plans and projections, sometimes neatly formulated, but generally half-formulated, illformulated, or unformulated. They have, almost invariably, a normative or evaluative

core with explicit or implicit indications as to the direction or directions social life should take. A philosophical scrutiny of social living, therefore has to examine its normative core as well, and the examination may require or inspire the philosopher to make some normative suggestions. But all this has to be done on the cognitive plane and with a convincing logic. An exercise of this type may not look attractive or useful to the people at large because appreciating, or even understanding, it presupposes a good deal of intellectual sophistication. Social philosophy, like any other branch of philosophy, is a professional, an elitist, enquiry. The philosopher need not feel shy in admitting that it is. The importance of a map is realized by a traveller journeying, or intending to journey, in the country mapped only if his journey is planned and purposive, and he would be able to use it only if he is able to interpret it.

As examples of some socially relevant issues in today's India a philosopher may attend to, we can mention those of reservation in jobs and in enrolment in academic institutions, secularism versus religious commitment, social responsibility of intellectuals, professional versus general morality, commitment to a cause versus commitment to a party, legal and moral rightness, the social role of education as an inculcator of values, etc. I shall be concerned in this essay only with the last one, and shall limit myself to discussing primarily, or almost exclusively, the role of formal education. Education is a very important socializing agent. But it has not received any serious consideration from contemporary Indian philosophers. They seem to have left it almost exclusively to the care of the teachers of training colleges and the (so-called) educational administrators or managers. They have their own role to play, but they cannot play the role which philosophers can and should.

## II

### **Collapse of Values**

Any Indian with a social conscience cannot help feeling concerned about the quality of life in post-independence India, particularly in the last three or four decades. Without straining his eyes even a little, he can notice the collapse, or near collapse, of values in any walk of life he cares to turn his gaze on. Whatever be

the amount of resources, material or human, which the country acquires, or hopes to acquire, by tapping its indigenous potentialities, or by extensive borrowings, they are not likely to be appropriately used for the welfare of its people if its existing value-orientation remains what it at present is.

It may not be an exaggeration to say that we are passing through a period of value, or moral, crisis. It is natural in such times to turn towards education for help because it is one of the commonest and most respected means for the inculcation as well as protection of the values the society prizes. It is, therefore, very important to find out how best the prevailing system of education can be used, with some adjustments, here and there, if necessary, to tone up the value-sense of those who go through it. It is hoped that a large majority of the youth would, if they do not already do, go through it. It is also reasonable to hope that through them the value-sense of others who do not, or would not be able to, can as well be improved because some contact or communion between the two groups is bound to take place. This is so because, almost truistically, the objective of any worth while educational scheme is to help and motivate the educatee to develop a sense of commitment to a set of values considered to be desirable.

But the collapse of values is neither less pervasive, nor less apparent, in the field of education. Even with half-closed ears one hears almost every day of a *student* having used unfair means in an examination with a revolver in his underpocket; of a *teacher* having helped him with the materials to copy from, or having manoeuvred his own doctorate by giving, directly or indirectly, illegal gratification to his supervisor or to the examiners; of the *management* of a school, consisting of some influential people, having arranged, of course on payment, for an examinee's answering his examination questions in his bedroom; of a politician or a highly placed *bureaucrat*, having helped the student, or the teacher, in getting a lucrative job, or promotion to a higher rank, leaving behind many contesters of decidedly superior merit, etc.. The obvious lesson is that the existing educational system needs to be refurbished in such a manner and to such an extent that it regains its (lost) agency for the inculcation and preservation of values and becomes capable of contributing its due share to the upliftment of the quality

of life in today's India. It is in this context that the talk of value education has acquired its currency.

This talk has become fashionable in diverse circles of people, for example among bureaucrats and policy planners, their political bosses, social workers, religious leaders, educationists, teachers, etc. But more often than not, it is ritualistic or ceremonial, or vitiated with an incorrect, or unrealistic, understanding of the process of education.

My concern with value education, or education in this essay would be predominantly pragmatic, or rather crudely matter of fact, and only minimally or peripherally theoretical. The reason is my conviction that to restore to the prevailing system of education its legitimate role as the inculcator and preserver of (at least some) values we need simply to ensure that it operates in a normal, unobstructed, manner. This is so because, as will be explained in the next section, some values are internal, indigenous or natural, to education. An educational process would get them inculcated if it is simply let to run its course without any extraneous interference, irrespective of the theory or theories of value, or of education, which are considered to be sound (or unsound). To be sure that an education system is value-oriented, we do not have to wait until the time philosophers have the good luck of formulating some impeccable theory of value, or of education. Rather, we have only to let it function the way it should ordinarily, or normally, function as per our *ordinary, common-sense*, understanding of what it is to impart and to receive education. The task of making education value-oriented should, therefore, be approached with an open mind, and more importance should be attached to the existential peculiarities of the Indian situation than to some academic consideration born out of any abstract theorizing.

### III

#### Education's Internal Values

Education could be formal or informal, imparted in the school or around the family's fireplace. Both are necessary to make one properly educated. They supplement each other. Sometimes there

occur situations in which it becomes difficult to distinguish between them. For example, some formally organized institutions have made an experiment to impart education to their students in an unstructured, non-rigorous, manner by artificially creating situations in which they, on their own, acquire some information, perceive a problem, or inculcate some skill. Similarly, the members of a family may contrive to impart some knowledge or skill to the children of the family in a semi-structured, or formalized, manner, without giving any appearance to the latter that they are being educated in a formal manner. I am concerned here, as already said, with the sort of education which is in intention as well as in appearance formal education. It is the education imparted in academic institutions which are required to run according to some formalized, or formalizable, rules and regulations, standards of evaluation, norms of performance, etc., pertaining to the various groups of individuals formally or organizationally associated with them. Broadly speaking, there are three such groups, namely, those of educatees, educators (or teachers) and some others who provide the non-teaching, supporting, facilities. A governmental policy, or planning, is by and large, concerned with formal education. It may as well be called curricular education because it invariably centres around some more or less formally structured curricula.

Certain values are basic, indigenous, or *internal* to any worthwhile, well-conducted, formal education, in the sense that they are actualizable in the very process of imparting/receiving, in the normal way, any type of education, humanistic, scientific, technological, or professional. They are built into, or constitutive of, the very concept of formal education, i.e. of our ordinary understanding of what it is to impart/receive education. That is why we do not consider it unfair, or incorrect, to forbear to call an educational system educational if it does not aim at, or generally lead to, their inculcation. These values are not valid only in the realm of education, i.e., only as long as one is engaged in imparting or receiving education. Rather, they make the personality of the individual, who has inculcated them, shine in every walk of his life, private and public. More importantly, the habits of mind he develops in the process, or as a result, of inculcating them have the potentiality to flower up, given a proper social climate, in some prizeable social or moral values of universal relevance, the

acquisition of which is the basic constituent of the personality which makes one a decent, cultured, human being we call a gentleman.

It is obvious to any observer that our present educational institutions, barring a tiny minority, are not nurturing education's internal values. They do not sincerely try to nurture them, and when a few of them do, they are very often obstructed either by some internal agency, say a group of students, teachers, or non-teaching functionaries, or by some external one, governmental, political, or communal. To ensure that they contribute to improving the quality of life by turning out viable individuals with a sense of commitment to a set of values, they need to be helped and monitored to impart education in the natural, normal, unimpeded, manner, so that education's internal values are not tampered with. These values are *processional*, i.e., inculcated in the normal process of education; that is why it is necessary that the normal process is not interfered with. Therefore, to the question 'What sort of education is fit to promote a value-based style of living?' my answer is 'Any sort, humanistic, scientific, technological, or professional, conducted in its natural, normal, way'. And, to the question 'How?' my answer is 'Through the inculcation of its internal, processional, values'.

There is a strong feeling in the minds of some that, by incorporating in the curriculum some sort of specific instruction about some chosen values, in a deliberate, well-planned, manner, we can go a great way towards making the educational system value-oriented, and through it the general social and societal framework. This move would, in effect, mean prescribing a specially designed course on some values. It would be one among the many the educatee, has to take. A system in which its existing courses are not properly conducted, or conducted in a manner which encourages the inculcation of some disvalues, cannot be expected to run its newly introduced value-course the way it ought to be run. There can be no guarantee that it would be free from the existing evils, for example, those of using, or helping one to use, unfair means in examinations; trying to get, or giving, high grades on the basis money given, or received or on that of communal considerations; not studying, or teaching, the full course but only the answers to a selected number of questions likely to be asked;



not attending, or teaching, scheduled classes but joining, or encouraging one to join, some seasonal, private coaching sessions, etc., etc. In all likelihood, the value-course would, like others, either contribute to some undesirable kind of value-orientation, or turn into a non-functional ritual. This does not imply that talk of values has to be completely avoided, or excluded from the curricula. It may be incorporated in some direct or indirect way. We may even highlight the present-day relevance of some specific moral or social values. But all this can contribute to value-orientation only if education is imparted, i.e., the scheduled courses, including the newly introduced course on values, are conducted, in a manner which lets the internal values of education to being instilled/imbibed in the normal way. But if the latter is done, even if no (separate) course on values is given, it would not matter much. Almost all the values we need to make life worth living would get reinforced, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly, through the cultivation of education's internal values. It seems to me that this would be a more effective and less resistance-provoking way to develop the value sense of the educatee than giving him a specially designed course on values.

#### IV

##### **The Context of the Worthy Life**

A sensible educational policy must be reinforced with (at least) a working conception of the worthy life. This only means that it must be inspired with, or guided by, one, and not that it should possess a well-articulated, full-blooded, theory of the good life, or wait for its formulation by someone. However, the guiding conception, or theory, must be chosen arbitrarily or at random, or be imported wholesale from outside. Rather, it should be one which, by and large, is a faithful representation of the ideals, aspirations, and preferences of the country's enlightened and cultivated citizens, and congruent with its cultural traditions they honour and feel proud of. With all this in mind, it seems to me that the worthy life can be characterized as one which, on the whole, is socially cohesive and individually satisfying. That is, one can be said to be leading a worthy life if, on the whole, in his dealings with other members of the society he coheres with, or honestly

tries to cohere with, the greatest possible number of them he is concerned with and as an individual feels a sense of satisfaction or fulfilment. This conception of the worthy life will do for any sort of social policy, and definitely for an educational policy which has its focus on the value-contributing capabilities of education. Moreover, what is in its favour is that this is what we ordinarily mean by the worthy life, and it can be easily seen to be deeply entrenched in our evaluative consciousness, moral, religious, as well as social.

It is a brute fact that, by nature, we want to live and not to commit suicide. But if life is not worth living, if it is better to die than to live, then it would be a sign of perversion in our nature. It would mean that we are so made that we want to, when we ought not to, live. But it is qually natural to believe that life is really worth living. To believe the contrary would surely be a torture. This does not mean, however, to believe that every kind of life is worth living. Rather, it means that some kinds or styles of life are, and most of the others which are not can be made, worth living. We assume that almost everyone can lead his life in more than one way and adopt means to make it worth while if in its present form it is not. To drop this assumption would amount to conceding that the human situation is unimprovable, and therefore, would entail the futility of all attempts at individual and social planning, or human engineering.

Let us now ask the question 'what are the factors which constitute the worthy life, or contribute to making a life worthy, if it is already not?' Quite naturally there would be several. But however short a list is prepared, education would (or should) surely figure in it. That education affects and should affect the quality of the educatee's life is too obvious to be emphasized. It is a common remark about an individual, whose life-style we consider undesirable, that he has been given bad education, or no education. This is so because education is a great refining and culturing agent, an important means of coverting an unworth, or indifferent, life-style into a worthy one. If any time it fails to perform this role, it would mean that it itself has become degenerate, or the social complex it belongs to has become degenerate. Its failure is normally a symptom of degeneration in

both, since degeneration in one invariably leads to degeneration in the other.

It is the context of the worthy life which I take to be the proper universe of discourse for discussing the value-inculcating role of education, i.e., for not only discussing how the educational process can effectively get certain values inculcated but also for ascertaining what sort of values it should get inculcated. It is extremely necessary to emphasize this truth because it seems to have almost completely forgotten by a large majority of people involved in the actual practice of receiving and/or imparting education. It has become most fashionable to talk about education in the context of its job-orientedness or skill-orientedness. But unless a viable conception of the worthy life is the moving force, acquisition of the job-performing ability, or of skill, cannot be trusted to have been imbued with the right kind of value, or to have not been imbued with some corrupt values. Lacking the right kind of value-orientation, a highly skilled person may not just be a poor job-performer but a social menace. Almost in every organization, one can very easily locate a person who is highly competent but extremely poor in his performance and adept in motivating some others to follow him.

Quite a few educators, what to speak of educatees, forget that *the whole point* of getting a job is *not* that it provides one with the means of his livelihood. Rather, his performance of the job must contribute to the dignity of his life and to that of some others he would be concerned with. This it can do only if it itself is dignified. But more often than not any reference to what may be called a dignified or worthy life is thought to be a matter of concern only for some workshy philosophers, and not at all for result-oriented educationists, administrators, or planners. This pernicious line of thinking has motivated many students to adopt the foulest means to score high grades in examinations, and many teachers to write for examinees cheap help books to secure success without any serious study. It has also led to the emergence of a class of unscrupulous middlemen who are ready to help both the groups in their projects, provided they are properly paid for their services. Writing or publishing a cheap help-book, which makes serious study unnecessary, is as abominable as, and perhaps more

than, inventing, or manufacturing, an instantly energizing drug which makes health care dispensable. The former damages the thinking ability of its reader and the latter some vital organ of its consumer.

## V

### Return to Internal Values

The stand I have taken—that education can contribute to the values essential for making life worth while by getting inculcated its internal values is plainly a naive or common-sensical one. Its being so I consider to be a reason in its favour. Just for this reason, if for no other, it deserves to be taken seriously. But then I must illustrate what I mean by an internal value and how it can contribute to raising the quality of life.

We can identify an internal value even in the most elementary or primitive stage of education. Take, for example, almost the first stage of educating a child, the process of teaching him writing the letters of the alphabet of the language taught. What a conscientious teacher aims at is not just to make him learn how to write the letters. As soon as his pupil acquires some manual control, he tells him that he has to write the letters not merely correctly but also beautifully. Rather, he would begin his lessons by asking him to copy some beautifully written or printed specimens of the letters. This is not accidental, nor anything extraordinary. The aim of learning how to write is not just to acquire the ability to write but to write elegantly. There is a value the teacher wants and helps the pupil to inculcate, namely, the value of elegant hand-writing. It gives to the child an idea, of course a rudimentary one, of what it is to do something elegantly.

Similarly, the teaching of linguistic structures, or some grammar, begins at a very elementary level. It *seems* to aim at merely enabling the child to express himself correctly, i.e., to speak and write the language taught in a *grammatically correct* manner. But this is only the *apparent* aim. The real aim is to help him to inculcate what may be called the value of communicative excellence, i.e., the ability to express his thoughts and feelings in a coherent, concise

and cultivated manner. The acquisition of this ability takes time and is obviously a gradual developmental process, which may never come to an end. When one makes some progress in this process and becomes linguistically mature enough to enjoy expressing himself in an elegant manner, mere grammatical correctness ceases to be a matter of prime importance. How greatly is communicative excellence valued by linguists is very vividly asserted in the classical couplet about the Sanskrit grammarian (= linguist) that, when he succeeds in saving even half a syllable, he is as happy as if he has been blessed with a son.

Since communication takes place in a society and involves interaction with others, communicative excellence can naturally ramify into the moral excellence of expressing oneself truthfully without hurting any feeling of the addressee. The moral principle 'Tell the truth but avoid telling it unpleasantly' can, without undue strain, be taken to be a social exemplification of the value of excellence in communication.

There are several internal values of education. Some of them are the following : respecting a fellow student because of his being a fellow student and not because of his parents' social or economic status, elegance in behaviour inside (and outside) the school, law-abidingness, punctuality, cooperativeness, i.e., sharing benefits and burdens with others and consequent curtailment of inordinate self-interest, commitment to complete an assignment in time, pride in academic excellence, or just excellence, sense of desert or prizing a good grade only if obtained deservedly, respect for institutional discipline and norms, openmindedness or aptitude for healthy criticism , etc. They are internal to the educational process at all levels because any educational institution, to function in the normal way, has to see that they are respected and imbibed by the educatee in a routine manner. They are the constituents of the process. They are values in perpetual operation in the normal implementation of curricular as well as extra-curricular programmes, and not things which have to be emphasized in some specially designed schemes.

The educatee must learn to behave in a certain manner inside the school premises, to respect the rules made by the school

for him, to cooperate with his fellow educatees, to be proud of his excellent performance because it is excellent, to feel elated for his good grades given to him because of his merit, to feel humiliated by being given a grace marks, etc. These things he has to do and the school has to train him to do because they are as central to the process of receiving / imparting education as conscientiously studying / teaching the contents of the courses prescribed. They do not form a set of special requirements, not do they require the introduction of any specialized methodological innovation.

In fact, whatever be the technique of methodology of education, and the subjects taught, the values mentioned above have to be operative if the target is to educate. Rather, if there is sincerity in receiving and imparting education. Further, if an educatee develops commitment to these values and behaves accordingly while remaining inside the school premises, his commitment is very likely to percolate in his behaviour even when he is outside, or leaves the school and joins a profession.

I have illustrated the values mainly in respect of the educatee, but their inculcation entails corresponding behaviour on the part of the teachers as well as on that of the supporting agencies, which include not only the non-academic staff but also the concerned Governmental personnel and the society. In fact, all of them have to play a very important role. Very often the educational machinery ceases to function in the normal, natural, way because some section of this large class of functionaries dishonours some of the values or encourages some disvalues. Any backsliding on the part of any one of them would have some adverse effect on what others do, or think they ought to do. For example, if the teacher does not care for any one of the values, the pupil may also not, and if the society does not, it would be extremely difficult even for the most sincere teacher to procure its inculcation by the pupil, or its compliance by a class four employee. All these values are inter-linked, and therefore together they constitute the normal practice of education. To waterdown one is to waterdown at least a few others. If the teacher is unpunctual in taking his classes, the inevitable result would be inadequate coverage of the course concerned. This would encourage slackness on the part of the pupil, motivating

him to ask for the postponement of the examination which would disturb the examination schedule. Inadequate course coverage may also prompt him to use unfair means in the examination and when punished to take help from some unscrupulous politician who is waiting to jump in the dirty pool. It is clear that so many immoralities would then very smoothly enter not only the world of education but also the wide world outside it. All this is not a mere guess but a common reality of contemporary Indian life. To see that the values I have talked about are internal to education we have simply to recollect and reflect on what we ordinarily understand by educating and getting educated and expect of an academic institution. It is not at all idealistic but completely normal to say that a school has to start functioning and close regularly at a certain time of the day, students and all others concerned have to be punctual, students have to treat each other, and have to be treated by others, teachers as well as non-teachers, alike, as students, i.e., equally, governance of the school has to be done by uniformly applicable rules, teaching and evaluation have to be done in a non-discriminative manner and as per the school schedule, teachers have to keep themselves academically well-equipped to provide good teaching, academic things have to be done only on academic considerations and academic decisions taken only by academic people, school discipline and elegance in behaviour, inside and outside the school, have to be respected and cultivated, etc.

Almost all moral values can very smoothly be nurtured through the inculcation of education's internal values, without necessitating any special effort. This is so because the inculcation of the latter provide a very favourable concrete setting for that of the former. To respect the school discipline, for example, the educatee may have to sacrifice some of his pressing desires. Suppose he wants very strongly to occupy the front seat in the class room but the school discipline requires that a student shorter than him should be there. This would mean he has to take a back seat, sacrificing at least some comfort he would have otherwise got. Such compliances would generate in him a care for the convenience or comfort of others which is the basic constituents of the moral virtue of benevolence. Similarly, the school regulation that he must abstain from receiving from any one else, directly or indirectly, any help in answering his questions in the examination hall (or at home), if respected

and complied with, would generate in him a regard for, and readiness to follow, a cluster a moral requirements. It can generate in him a sense of justice and fairplay even at his own cost, a sense of law-abidingness out of respect for the law, a sense of rectitude at a time when he may feel strongly that he needs to do something wrong etc. In a like manner, respecting a fellow student simply because he is a fellow student can develop into the disposition to respect a person as a person, which is a basic ingredient of the concept of each one of democracy, socialism, and secularism. All this would mean that he is being given a moral training, which if not obstructed, would hopefully develop in him a highly stable moral will, which is another name for a good moral character.<sup>1</sup> But this means that a school which disregards the values, which naturally go with an educational practice, does not merely turn out incompetent and unscrupulous graduates but undesirable and unethical individuals.

Being educated, i.e. educatedness, is itself a great value. It is a supervenient value in the sense that it depends on education's pursuing its internal values. The extremely high status of this value has to be instilled in the mind of the educatee as much as, if not more than, any other moral or academic value. If an educatee feels, after having gone through the educative process, that he has become not only more qualified for a certain job, but also worthier as an individual than he was before entering into it, it would mean that he has learnt to appreciate the value of educatedness and that the educative process has functioned the way it ought to have. If he does not have this feeling, either the educative process has failed, or he has failed to receive what the process tried to give. This value as well can be instilled in the educatee's mind by trying to instil in him due regard for the internal values, backed by the society's honouring them, but certainly not by sermonizing. It does not need to be said that very many of our educatees attach no great value to the education they have received. An important cause of this is the neglect of the internal values by the school they were educated in.

I have already indicated my lack of enthusiasm for making some values the content of a separate course with a view to facilitate their inculcation. Values can be taught with a very high degree



of sophistication in academic courses and philosophers have been doing that since ages. Such exercises are mostly logical and always highly theoretical. They are very useful for conceptual enrichment, but not so useful for their inculcation. To design a course on values with the motivation to encourage their inculcation is something very different. Some well meaning people believe that it would help their inculcation, and it is this belief which is behind the proposal off and on made to introduce moral education, in all types of education, as a separate course to be taught in a period or two every week. I am highly sceptical about the success of such a course. Values are inculcated more by observing examples and practices and by sincerely pursuing them, than by direct instructions. Moreover, moralizing, or sermonizing, is so common in the country and very often from those whose mouths are vociferous in direct proportion to the dirt of immoralities on their hands, that the chances of even a well-conducted moral instruction becoming counter-productive cannot be ruled out.

However, something could be done about the content of education to promote value-inculcation. In this connection, I would like to make the following suggestion:

To instil a sense of value in the mind of an educatee is to help him to build some value attitudes, some dispositions to think and behave in a certain manner. For example, the value of discipline inculcated by an educatee may be exhibited, in later life, in his disposition to stand in a queue at the railway booking counter, or in talking gracefully with his superior who has taken a hurtful but just action against him. A value attitude may be rooted in an emotion or desire, or in some rational consideration. If the former is the case, in some difficult, trying, or entirely novel, situation it may backslide. But if the latter, the chances of its remaining stable are much greater. Therefore, a programme of education should strengthen the educatee's rationality and ground his value commitments in it. It should satisfy his questioning, doubting, propensities, develop in him a free, critical, mind, and make him realize that it is most rational for him to develop a set of value-attitudes. This would amount to convincing him, or to helping him to be convinced on his own, that he can lead a worthy, or happy, life, in his private as well as public dealings, only

by inculcating certain values. Since commitment to values would then be generated in him through his own rationality, the educative process cannot be accused of doing indoctrination or brain-washing. Some feel that there are some spiritual values embedded in our culture which should be inculcated. But even their inculcation should be done, if it is to be done, through his rationality. Only then it can be hoped to be stable.

The plausible way to strengthen rationality as well seems to be to conduct all courses in such a manner that his critical, logical, abilities are properly nurtured. A special course in critical thinking may be designed and it may be to some extent helpful, but it would not be very effective if other courses are taught in a dogmatic or doctrinaire manner. It should be noted that this course would not be on values. Its thrust would be on developing the educatee's rationality and through it on convincing him that it is in his best interests that he has a certain sort of value-commitment.

To conclude, what I have been arguing for can be summarized as follows :

Every worth-while educational programme assumes a conception of the worthy life and aims at helping the educatee to make his life worth living. This it does by instilling in his mind a set of values which are internal to its normal implementation. These values flower up into some others which are morally and socially desirable. To inculcate, or instil, values is to develop a set of value-attitudes, or dispositions, to think and behave in a certain manner. These attitudes are stable if they are grounded in rationality. To nurture rationality, or the rational temper, it is necessary that in all courses taught to an educatee care is taken to encourage in him the spirit of free and critical enquiry. This process may be helped by teaching a special course with its thrust on the development of rationality. But it would be only minimally, or not at all, effective if other courses are taught dogmatically. However, the special course need not be on values, or be on values only indirectly. It should rather try to promote the development of value-commitment in the educatee by convincing him that having the commitment

is more rational than not having it, or hopefully, that having it is rational, while not having it irrational.<sup>2</sup>

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#### NOTES

1. See my 'Educational Policy and Value-Attitudes', *Ārvīkṣiki*, Vol. I, 1968, pp. 51-58 (Philosophy Department, Benaras Hindu University, Varanasi).
2. An extensively revised version of the author's key-note address entitled 'Education as Inculcation of Internal Values' delivered on June 29, 1992, to the I.C.P.R. sponsored National Seminar on Value Education, held at National Institute of Education, New Delhi, June 29 to July 1, 1992.

Comments on this paper from interested scholars are welcome and they would be published in the journal if found worthwhile.

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