

this about three quarters of a century ago, it is equally applicable to the present day educational system. From the very beginning, information is forced into the brains of children in such a way that they are totally alienated from the realities of life and from Nature.

Peter H. Wolff, a Professor from Harvard Medical School, described to me how some students from the Harvard Faculty of Education had undertaken to experience directly what it is like to go to High School, when one is no longer involved in the day-to-day struggle of survival. "Each graduate student accompanied one pupil for the entire school day; and each independently was shocked to discover that going to school consisted of six hours of unrelenting boredom; that the teachers were so overwhelmed by the mere task of keeping order, they had little energy left even to serve up the programme curriculum packaged for them at some institution of higher learning, and had no time whatsoever to find out what students might be thinking. All potentially embarrassing intellectual encounters between teacher and pupil were assiduously avoided; and the hours ground on until the final bell of the day released both parties from their tedium."

The process has to be reversed if the purpose of education is to prepare people for participating in the building of *swaraj*. Rather than teaching discipline and obedience, the purpose of education should be to foster the intellectual and ethical competence of individuals, and to develop their independence and mind so that they will have the tools and courage to challenge untruth and social injustice. Most children, at least before they go to school, have a natural urge to develop intellectual competence, to ask questions and to find such answers as will satisfy them. This quality - the urge to discover truth - is destroyed by the educational system today.

Gandhi believed that "non-violent resistance is the noblest and the best education. It should come, not after the ordinary education in letters of children, but it should precede it. It will not be denied that a child, before it begins to write its alphabet and to gain worldly knowledge, should know what the soul is, what truth is, what love is, and what powers are latent in the soul. It should be essential of real education that a child should learn that in the struggle of life, it can easily conquer hate by love, untruth by truth, violence by self-suffering." During his last years,

Gandhi gave the highest priority to education. The *Nayee Talim* scheme, both in its spirit as well as programme, was education for a life of *Satyagraha*.

Satyagraha has two aspects: discovering and living truth by creating alternative programmes of a constructive nature; and resisting untruth, social injustice, discrimination and exploitation. Unlike in the present system, education for a non-violent social order will be geared to real-life situations and will directly participate in the processes of social change and development. In his editor's note in *Basic Education* by Mahatma Gandhi, Bharatan Kumarappa wrote, "that true education of the individual, which is all-round development, of his faculties, is best obtained through action. If biological thinking develops in man only as an aid to action, as revolutionary psychologists tell us, then Gandhi's scheme of education bases itself on the sound and indisputable fact that knowledge and understanding develop in relation to problems set by action." Instead of textbooks, life itself becomes the centre of education. Education for life is, therefore, education through life.

Action for participating in life processes will be at three levels and a balanced programme for all the three will be required. These three levels are:

1. The individual - integrated development of the body and the mind;
2. The individual in the community - social, cultural and political life; and
3. The human community as part of Nature. The above categories of action cannot be considered in isolation. For instance, the development of the individual is inseparable from both the community as well as Nature. Similarly, a community's life will be interesting and free from exploitation only if the individual's conscience and capacities receive the necessary encouragement and opportunity to blossom, and only when there is a creative accord between the human community and Nature.

1. The Individual

A. S. Neil believed that there is an inherent goodness in the child, and "that an average child is not born a cripple, a coward or a soulless automaton, but has full potentialities to love life and to be interested in life." Children brought up with *self-regulation* grow fearlessly. By self-regulation, he meant "the right of a baby to live freely, without outside authority in things psychic and somatic. It means that the

baby feeds when it is hungry; that it becomes clean in habits only when it wants to; that it is never stormed at or spanked; that it is always loved and protected.” There is a clear distinction between freedom and license. Neil comments, “In a disciplined home, the children have *no* rights. In the spoiled home, they have *all* the rights. The proper home is one in which children and adults have equal rights. And the same applies to school.” Children brought up with self-regulation will develop the quality of love, reason and integrity.

Productive manual work, which is regarded as inferior to intellectual work today, should become an essential part of education, not as a separate item in the curriculum but as a centre of education. By planning education around creative activities, an integrated development of the mind and body is insured; at the same time the emotional side of the individual’s personality is allowed to express itself. It also has deep relevance to the relationship between the individual and the community as well as Nature.

2. The Individual in the Community

The school run at Sevagram, Gandhi’s centre in the 1940s and continued until the late 1950s, was far from perfect. However, its experiment in developing community and political consciousness provides a useful model. It was planned on self-government lines. One of its objectives was to build a self-sufficient, non-discriminatory, egalitarian community. Each student and teacher had one vote. They shared all the responsibilities equally. The general assembly made or repealed the laws and also supervised the practising of these laws. The most important gains from this experiment were that the members of the community, both children and adults, had first-hand experience of democratic principles, of the dynamics of authority, of conflicts and their resolutions by discussions, and of fearlessness, forgiveness and cooperation.

3. Community and Nature

Rabindranath Tagore had pointed out, decades ago, that the greatest fault in the educational system was that it had created a wide gap between Nature and human beings. His was basically a spiritual and aesthetic approach. Gandhi adopted this approach and added the economic dimension to it. Within the framework of education for a non-violent social order, the relationship between human society

and Nature will be that of two cooperating parties rather than what it is today, both in school and in industry - one exploiting the resources of the other. There is enough literature on the subject of ecology to show how desperate is the need to reverse this approach.

“On the whole, whether it is a question of education of the mind and of intellectual functions or education of the ethical conscience, if the right to educate implies that it envisions full development of the human personality and strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedom, it is important to understand that such an ideal cannot be attained by any of the common methods. Neither the independence of the person, which is assumed by this development, nor the reciprocity that is evolved by his respect for the rights and freedoms of others, can be developed in an atmosphere of authority and intellectual and moral constraints. On the contrary, they both imperviously demand a return by their very make-up to a lived experience and to a freedom of investigation outside of which any acquisition of human values is only an illusion.”

The above is a quotation from Jean Piaget’s essays to UNESCO. It states the whole issue in a nutshell. Whatever one may plan or envision concerning bringing about a non-violent social order, it will not have the desired results *without providing lived experience and freedom of investigation*.

The premise that human beings suffer from the guilt of original sin, and therefore they should free themselves from the guilt by suffering and repentance and return to the stage of innocence, is not the right approach to build any educational system. Such an approach cannot allow *self-regulation*, nor can it generate confidence in the inherent goodness in human beings. Some believe that since a part of each individual is beast, some outlets have to be provided to sublimate the aggressive instincts so as to liberate the individual from the beast.

Both the above approaches show a serious lack of faith in the innate human capacity to reject oppression and challenge authority. Human beings have a profound capacity to think rationally and sit back and reflect intelligently; in other words, the natural gift and the urge to ask questions and find satisfactory answers. *A non-violent social order will come into being when this natural gift will be able to blossom in a climate free from authority and intellectual and moral constraints.*

11. EDUCATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Transformation of Man

According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Adult education, in its broadest sense, signifies any form of learning undertaken by or provided for mature men and women." Naturally, due to the very wide scope of this definition, various interpretations can be and are given to it, each depending upon the notions about education and social values prevalent in a society. Moreover, it is a matter for consideration as to what one means by 'adult' and 'mature' in this context. But let us first see what is meant by *education* and what its objectives are. Why, after all, is there any need for it? Do other animals have systems that can be called education? If they do, what then is the difference in those systems and what we call education?

An answer to these questions is the theme of a poem by Rabindranath Tagore. It is the twenty-eighth poem of *Balaka*. The *Poet/sadhaka* is addressing his God. "You have given the song to the bird, which it sings. In return it gives no more. You have given me only my voice and *swara* but I return much more - I sing. You have endowed the air with freedom and have not tied it down with limitations. You have placed so many burdens on my shoulders; I walk tottering and staggering, throwing them all off one by one, at last to arrive one day at your feet. I reach you after merging all the burdens into *mukti* (liberation). You have adorned the full moon with a smile and wealth, which it goes on scattering on this earth. You have given me so many sorrows and sufferings; but on the night of our meeting, I come to you after cleansing them with tears and transforming them into *ananda* (Joy)."

The Poet complains, "To everyone else you give but from me alone you expect." In the last five lines, however, he makes the point, "Whatever I can give with love, you walk down from your throne to come to me and accept it in your lap smilingly." He adds with a tremendous sense of pride, "In return you receive much more than what you give with your own hands."

The above statement points out not only to the difference between human beings and other living forces of Nature, it also gives an idea of human pursuits. There is yet another point made in the poem, namely, that human beings are blessed with the potential and are empowered to become what they ought to be. We do not come

into this world well versed with the *ragas*, but we are gifted with a voice that can be trained to make a variety of sounds. We are also bestowed with the sensitivity and capacity to judge the effects of different sounds and their combinations. We are able to create relationships between a variety of sounds and our emotions and intellectual faculties.

Similarly, we are capable of controlling our emotions, drawing a line between good and evil, right and wrong, the beautiful and the ugly, the obscene and the divine, and the mundane and the sublime. Whereas the bird, air and moonlight in the poem have no choices open to them, humans have a vast variety of pursuits to choose from. These pursuits can be, and often are, contradictory. On what factors, then, does this freedom of choice between contradictory pursuits depend?

Education Liberates

The classical view of man is that he is both an angel and an animal. He has often to choose from contradictory inclinations. Some of the inclinations may be rooted in the irrational, which is stronger than the rational. Eventually, the choice will depend on the awareness of what constitutes good and evil and of the consequence of one choice against the other. Mere awareness of these factors is not sufficient -it should be accompanied by the will to act.

Unfortunately, present-day education does not prepare one to make the right kind of choices, which our old system of education did. Let us look into the ways *education* was defined in our culture. There is a classical saying, according to which, education that does not inculcate humility in the student is like a mother whose breast is filled with poison instead of milk. While talking to some of us once, Vinoba Bhave said that you should consider yourself truly educated only if doing service to others becomes an integral part of your personality. Or, true education is that which liberates one from all bondages, physical as well as mental. Gandhi wrote that real education must secure the student economic, social and spiritual freedom. Shri Shankaracharya defined peoples' education as, in essence, "the elimination of man's tendencies to evil". It is also said that the true object of education is to give man "the unity of truth".

None of the above definitions or for that matter objectives described by great cultures and teachers mention literacy and accumulation of information as the major

aim of education. Yet, modern education puts all its efforts and investment in collecting information and playing with it. It has become something like the pulp of a fruit, the juice of which has been totally extracted. This is not the occasion to go into the reasons behind this change - in fact aberration - in the thinking on education in this modern age. However, it might be of some use to reflect a bit on the question.

While talking about “the unity of truth”, Rabindranath Tagore once observed: “Formerly, when life was simple, all the different elements of man were in complete harmony. But then there came the separation of the intellect from the spiritual and physical; the school education put its entire emphasis on the intellectual and on the physical side of man. We devote our sole attention to giving children information, not knowing that by this emphasis we are accentuating a break between the intellectual, the physical and the spiritual life.” The spiritual world is not anything separate from this world. Matter and force have no meaning for us unless they are related to something that is our own, something infinitely personal, the nature of which is in human love, in the desirability of the good, and in the inexpressible beauty of Nature.

The irony is that hardly any educationist of standing, and who is in a position of influence, refutes these aims of education. In actuality, they even quote them as ideals in the preambles of their policy statements. And yet, the race continues in the single direction of physical growth and development. This is despite the fact that Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi were able to demonstrate on a practical scale that it is within our reach - both materially as well as morally - to plan and organise good wholesome education for all members of our society - children, men and women of all ages. The crux of the problem is that such a decision can be taken only if we have the will to change our approach and attitude towards development and our lifestyle.

Adult Education and its Responsibility towards Human Rights

It is hard for me to make any real distinction between ‘education’ and ‘adult education’. Principles that apply to the education of children also apply to the education of adults. What else is college and university education if it is not adult education? Or is the ‘adult’ who is supposed to be the recipient of what is generally

called 'adult education', fundamentally different from the 'adult' who goes to college? Is it so only because he or she does not know how to read and write? If that is the criterion, then there must be something wrong somewhere. It is a fact that many a man and many a woman in our society who lack the ability to read and write are more educated and wise than the so-called educated.

As early as 1909, in his little book *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi had warned those who considered literacy as the sole purpose, or even the basis of adult education. "A peasant earns his bread honestly. He has ordinary knowledge of the world. He knows fairly well how he should behave towards his parents, his wife, his children and his fellow villagers. He understands and observes the rules of morality. But he cannot write his own name. What do you propose to do by giving him the knowledge of letters? Will you add an inch to his happiness?" For Gandhi, teaching, reading and writing was not the 'adult education' that people wanted or needed. Unfortunately, literacy still continues to be the only programme of adult education of official organisations working in this field.

In spite of all the emphasis given to literacy, I wonder what would be the proportion of people who have attended 'adult education' classes, to those who have on their own learnt to write letters to their family and friends, keep their account books and read their *Ramayana* or *Koran*, and newspaper. Figures given by concerned people in the field invariably include those who have been taught to write their names and put it down as their signatures - with some difficulty. That surely is not literacy, let alone adult education. Experience shows that despite the wish to learn to read and write, very few actually succeed in doing so, unless that skill proves to be of some use in improving the quality of their life and making them more independent. At the same time, there are skills, which if effectively imparted, would be useful and welcomed by the majority of the adult population. One of the tasks would be to improvise and choose tools that suit the culture of the people and are within their reach. Even if the above goal is accomplished, it will be only one of the essential components of what, in all honesty, can be called adult education. When Gandhi said that to the poor, God comes through bread, he meant that bread was the way and not the goal. For him the goal was God. To reach God, or whatever one calls the ultimate objective, the journey cannot end with bread alone. It should aim at improving the quality of life of society at large. The quality of life of the community

or the nation depends basically on the level of maturity of its members. Hence the other task of adult education, equally essential, is to nurture the spirit and capacity of the population to make mature and wise decisions on social matters, and the strength to implement them.

Respect for the Fundamental Rights of all Human Beings

Elements that make a community friendly and creative are a sense of one's own social responsibility and the awareness and respect for the fundamental rights of all human beings. These two elements are interlinked. I would like to give an illustration to make the point. A has the right 'to freedom of thought, conscience and religion' (Article 18 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of the United Nations). Nobody should be able to deprive A of that basic right, whatever its personal interpretation may be. However, A has also the responsibility to make absolutely certain that none of his or her actions, manifest or concealed, will in any way violate B's (or for that matter of anyone else's, living nearby or in any other part of the world) right to freedom of thought and conscience and the practice of religion. What it means is that in a sane society, rights and responsibilities merge into one another. One's freedom cannot be real freedom unless others are also equally free. It is this realisation that can give humility and wisdom. I think it is on account of this factor that Gandhi and many other wise people have not spoken as much on the question of *basic rights* as they have on *personal duties*. It seems sensible to say that if everyone performs one's duties conscientiously, the world will be a much better place to live in.

It was probably so at the time when most communities lived in more or less self-contained and self-contented units; when codes of behaviour were strictly followed by the dictates of traditions and the clergy. Now, when the old has nearly all disappeared and the new has not yet emerged, there is near chaos in thought, action and even expectations -personal as well as social. It is hard to reach a consensus on most matters. Again, let me give an illustration. It may not be the right way of putting it, but it will make the point and is relevant to adult education. Patriotism is considered one of the highest virtues of a citizen. Most national constitutions in the world have an article or two declaring that 'defence of the motherland is the sacred duty of every citizen', in the opinion of the State, if an act on the part of a citizen is

interpreted as a violation of this constitutional requirement, it is considered a punishable offence. In some cases, the punishment can be as severe as a death penalty.

Article 3 of the Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations says, "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person". Some religions also propagate non-killing as part of their doctrine. The *Sermon on the Mount* clearly commands, 'Thou shalt not kill'. Such religions, therefore, do not allow their members to join the armed forces. In other words, they are against the use of military weapons. There are several other groups who believe that as everyone should have the right to life, they should also not take anyone's life. They consider human life to be sacred and which, under no circumstances, should be destroyed. Believers of this kind of philosophy will not join military service. They will be considered traitors and will be punished if there is conscription in their country. Whereas the Human Rights Declaration allows them freedom of religious belief, the State punishes them. Even today, when the concept of one world has become universally accepted and the dynamics of nationalism is losing its hold, all States, the majority of parliaments of supposedly democratic countries, and the majority of the intelligentsia everywhere do not hesitate to inflict severe punishments on those who refuse to participate in establishments like the army, which involve killing of human beings.

Right to Life

What do you do when someone's so-called duty comes in conflict with a fundamental right of another person? The problem of 'right to life' is not limited to militarism only. Killing men, women and children by bombs and bullets is a violation of human rights. It is one thing to be killed in a natural catastrophe but another thing altogether to be killed by forces that are man-made. Gross socio-economic disparity is not natural. It is the result of selfishness and greed of some people and of wrong structures and instruments of planning and administration. If a State allows it to happen, then it also should be held responsible in this matter. According to the Declaration of Human Rights, it is a violation of the right defined in Article 25, which is self-explanatory:

"Everyone has a right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, and housing and medical care and

necessary social services; and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

“Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.”

When the UN General Assembly adopted the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, there were fifty-eight member countries in the organisation. India was one of them. The adoption of the Declaration was unanimous. It unambiguously meant that the signatories were fully convinced that there are some fundamental rights, of which not a single one should be denied to any citizen of their respective countries.

Immediately after its adoption, the General Assembly forcefully called upon all member countries to publicise the text of the Declaration and “to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded, particularly in schools and other educational institutions without distinction based on the status of countries or territories.” In other words, it was expected that the Declaration should have been ceaselessly utilised as an important instrument of education for people of all ages and for education for peace, equality, true freedom, sound development and national and international understanding.

I shall be surprised if one in ten teachers of our schools and colleges and institutions that are engaged in adult education knows about the Declaration and its profound educational significance. How many of the staff of social-work institutions and centres are taught and motivated to utilise the Declaration as a tool for education and development? I should, in all fairness, mention here that the Declaration in this context is a Declaration of agreement on principles that should be observed in a certain matter - not binding by law but observed by honour.

The Declaration covers almost every aspect of human concern. A quick look at it will show that it clearly defines the personal, civil and political rights of the individual. It also specifies the social, economic and cultural conditions required for building a just society. In my opinion, the Declaration does not go far enough in the direction of the principles and scenarios discussed earlier in the present paper. Nonetheless, it can be a good beginning. An imaginative treatment of the principles put forward in it can be used to radicalise the work of adult education. It will definitely be useful

to give people a wider perspective on social life and international mutuality at the peoples' level.

Life-Long Education for the Good of All

The last point I wish to make here is even more important for building a sound approach to adult education. Education, whether it is of children or adults, is a continuous process. We should not assume that the education of the adult is a temporary phase in the life of the individual. It is not like running a school to which students come for a certain number of years. It is a movement. There can never be a time when human society will not feel the need for education as a continuous process of development.

The final question, however, is that of objectives. Do we want to remain trapped in the shallow materialistic race and let the world remain divided between the rich on one side and the vast majority of poor people on the other side; between those who enjoy all the privileges of modern life and who usurp others' rights on one side and those who are deprived of even the most basic human rights such as food, work and shelter, on the other side, whatever may be the reasons behind it? Or do we want to change the course of things in the direction of building a world in which people will exercise their responsibilities and fundamental rights wisely for the good of all? Adult education in its true sense can make a profound contribution in this direction.

12. CREATIVE, HENCE A PEACEFUL SOCIETY

The kind of sadness and destruction we are experiencing all over the world is due to the increasing power of man's distorted intellect and selfish attitude. Economic or political steps may seem to bring change, but they are temporary. Change will be permanent only if steps other than those leading to physical indulgence and self-interest can be taken and practiced.

Music, literature and art provide those kinds of possibilities. Healthy human attitudes are built by them. Rhythm and harmony between the specific and the whole - one and many - is their gift to human kind.

Nandalal Bose

Conscientious Objectors - Making their own Decisions

Once, while travelling in Scandinavia in 1966, I had a meeting with nearly one hundred or so Swedish men of draft age in a training camp for Conscientious Objectors (CO). They had declared themselves against military service on the grounds of conscience and opted for alternative civilian work. That year nearly six hundred draftees had declared themselves as Conscientious Objectors. Towards the end of the meeting, I asked the group if they knew the total number of conscripts that year. "Over twenty-five thousand", one of them answered. Then I asked if they could explain why on earth only six hundred out of twenty-five thousand had opted for CO status, especially as life for a CO in Sweden was easier than that of a conscripted soldier -they could go home every week and their girl-friends and relatives could visit them every now and then?

The answer to my question came after the meeting, when about twelve of them suggested that we continue the discussion informally in the bar. In short, what came out of this discussion was, as one of them said, "The fact is that they are afraid of making their own decisions." Another said, "Most young men dislike military service, yet to write 'No' on the form is difficult. After a period of dilemma they just sign 'Yes' on the form, designed precisely in a manner that will put the draftee in that particular dilemma."

In countries with military-conscription, men of draft age receive their orders to personally report for registration - a constitutional requirement. A would-like-to-be a CO has to submit a special application for obtaining that status. The mechanism for obtaining CO status is such a deterrent that most young men decide to go for military service. It is the easiest way to escape the unpleasant experience of going through the exercise - filling up special forms, producing proof of their pacifist conviction and facing tribunals, etc. They console themselves by thinking that after all life in the military, especially in peace time, is not too bad, and its length is four months shorter than that for doing alternative service. The essence of all this is that in one case the decision is made *for you* and in the other *you* have to make *your own decision*.

I have described only one situation, i.e. with regard to compulsory military service in some countries. However, in all the countries of the world there are traditions, laws and practices that train and condition individuals not to be able to make their own decisions on many issues that they face in day-to-day life. The crux of the matter is that in spite of the claims of modern up-bringing and education - that it prepares the individual to face life sensibly and courageously - men and women are the least prepared to confront the challenges and dilemmas of life intelligently and courageously. Just like the young men who put 'Yes' on their draft forms when they faced the dilemma, most people do not know what they actually want and must do.

Learn to Know Thyself

There is a beautiful anecdote from the seventh century philosopher Azid ibn Muhammad al Nasafi. "When Ali asked Mohammad, 'What am I to do that I may not waste my time?' The Prophet answered, '*Learn to know thyself.*'" The tragedy is that modern education spends most of its time and resources in teaching facts about the universe and going into space, etc., but totally ignores the need for *self-knowledge*, which alone can help in resolving the dilemmas that are presented at every new step one takes in life. The large majority of Swedish conscripts who could not take a concrete step, in spite of their dislike for military conscription, illustrate their ignorance about self as well as of the objective reality. They remained victims of the situation created by the State, using the narrow concept of nationalism and lack of a sound educational system. If they had learnt and practised the art of *knowing one's*

self, many more among the twenty-five thousand would have refused military service. The same applies to many other aspects of life in most regions of the world.

The awareness of the need for *self-knowledge* is further scuttled by the introduction of fear in several ways from the beginning of one's life as a child. Educational principles such as 'reward and punishment' and emphasis on performance do more harm than good to the growing individual. They create fear in several forms, e.g. fear of failure, fear of losing, fear of death. At the same time, I must say that it need not always be so. I remember the Greenham Common Protest Camp initiated by a small group of women, who felt desperate about the prospects of the U.S. cruise missiles being positioned in their country. These women acknowledged their fear of nuclear weapons and tried to gain confidence to take action. They said, "Fear is the starting point". Yet, in spite of having enough fear of nuclear weapons and their disastrous consequences, millions have never taken any such action in their lives. They have not realised that fear can be the starting point. The women of Greenham Common, however, transcended their fear and transformed it into action. For them the action they took was, "For building a life worth living."

Real Education Alone Can Help

In our present context, I am convinced that education plays a very crucial role. What is education after all? Before dealing with this question, I would like to put before you a problem. For many years, scientists and so-called enlightened people have been talking about the question of environmental pollution. Take, for example, the degree of pollution in Delhi. In the last five years, Delhi's environment has becoming increasingly polluted. It is difficult to even see an object like a tree clearly in the late afternoon. A large number of people have started suffering from throat diseases, lung problems, etc. But neither the administration nor the public has done or has been able to do anything to overcome the problem. I am extremely impressed by the qualitative as well as totally ignore the unconscious, the *id*, which contains the passion and the source of all energy. According to Freud (1940), the *id* is unorganised, the *ego* organised; the *id* observes the pleasure principle, the *ego* the reality principle; the *id* is emotional, the *ego* rational; the *id* conforms to the primary processes which ignore differences and are oblivious of contradiction and of space and time, the *ego* conforms to the secondary processes which are analytical and

respect the principle of contradiction and categories of space and time. Under the impact of present-day educational practices and also the kind of upbringing, the *id*, the *unconscious*, does not only remain *unlived* but is also repressed.

Herbert Read explains it very well: "The whole ideal of education is intellectual. It tends to become even narrower than that, the ideal ... is scientific. Even in subjects that are described as 'liberal' - philosophy, literature and history -the spirit of teaching becomes increasingly 'objective' ... and all questions of 'value' are rigidly excluded...."

"I agree to a limited extent in discipline of the will as given in games education. I do not deplore the time given to games in our schools - on the contrary, it is often the only time well spent. But the moral discipline thus inculcated is of very limited duration - it has no depth, it does not involve the imagination or the emotional life in any profound sense. Games morality, the team spirit, has become indeed just one more social convention, though to be 'a good sport' generally means to behave like a human being rather than a conventional citizen - which means, in other words, to disregard 'morality'. But 'morality', in the sense of code of right and wrong, has to be distinguished from the moral values of good and evil. Morality itself has been intellectualised, codified, and made a matter of rational judgment instead of spontaneous action. Moral education

in the ancient world, when Plato and Aristotle handled the theme, meant the learning of something like good manners or good form, good doing and good making; it was a dynamic concept, a concept of mobility, of wisdom, of courage. ... But I am quite sure that our existing systems of education lead right away from social union, and dissolve the subtle bonds of love and fellowship, and leave us a nerve-ridden aggressive herd,"³

The present system of education is partitive. Instead of uniting, its tendency is to divide. Instead of fostering mutual aim and love, it generates competition and hatred. It is based on a caste system and hierarchical divisions, not only in age and professional groups, but also by deciding that certain tests should determine the right of an individual child to proceed beyond a particular stage. Within each group, similar tests and examinations determine the place of the individual child within the

group. The procedure has the effect of pitting child against child in an unhealthy struggle. This process accentuates the sense of social disunity.

Education which accentuates disunity cannot foster a sense of community, and where there is no sense of community, in other words, no sense of belonging; it cannot be expected to give any importance to social responsibility or values which recognise the need of human beings to live with each other in a community based on sharing and mutual help. Fullness of life cannot be realised in a disunited society, and where there is no evidence of fullness of life, there cannot be real knowledge of the integrated self.

I do not need to elaborate on the development of the individual's personality during the first three or four years of life. Freud, his followers and many other psychologists have convincingly pointed out some facts about the existence of aggressive and destructive instincts in human beings. We are not born with these instincts, but these are an inevitable consequence of the infant's adaptation to external reality. The strength of these instincts depend upon the degree of severity of the experience beginning from the time of birth and the early months and years of one's life. These experiences of infancy get buried in the unconscious and are *forgotten*, but they find their way under disguised forms in adult life. Unless these instincts have the right outlets at the right time, they turn inwards, with destructive effects. The period of infancy is a difficult one in the relationship of the infant with its parents, which again can result in problems of adjustment with the world around. But I shall not go further into that discussion here.

The issue is two-fold. One aspect is concerned with the need to liberate the personality from those fears and complexes that have accumulated during infancy and the early years of one's life. The other aspect is related to the orientation of the personality in the direction of social integrity. One demands healthy outlets for the energy, which has regressed into destructive tendencies, and the other requires growing in the direction of creativity and social good. Again, it is the task of education and educators - I do not leave out parents from this category - to ensure that the processes of growing up, and the environment in which the individual develops all his or her faculties, makes the journey of life fulfilling and socially constructive.

Experiences from Child Art

As a teacher myself, I have observed that children who engage themselves in spontaneous creative activities are happier children than those who do well academically, but do not take part in either sports or creative activities such as craft-work, painting and music. I have also found that children's drawings that are the result of spontaneous activities are a direct evidence of their physiological and psychological disposition. These spontaneous activities of self-expression create a great deal of self-confidence, a healthy self-image in children. After all, self-expression is self-improvement and self-realisation.

Freedom to be close to Nature - to be one with it - is to gain one's own freedom to grow in fullness. Child art not only allows but also encourages the artist to enter the world of freedom, to the full fruition of all his gifts and talents, to attain true and stable happiness in adult life. Art leads the child out of himself or herself, and helps the individual in becoming an integral part of not only the community but also of the larger unity between Nature and human society.

From my own experience in the field of *child art and education*, I have seen that art activities in general also have a therapeutic quality, which liberates individuals, to a great extent, from their aggression and other repressed instincts accumulated during and from childhood. My experience with our rural population has also convinced me that people who live on land farming and gardening, people who earn their livelihood from art and handicrafts, making things of daily use for themselves and their communities, are, by and large, more disinclined towards war and war-like activities than those who do intellectual type of work in both rural and urban areas. This disinclination towards war in peasants and artisans can be attributed to two factors. The work that they do provides them with healthy outlets for their emotions and violent urges, probably because it sublimates their aggressive instincts. It may sound simplistic, but it is true that after engaging in weeding out unwanted growth in the field, one feels liberated from the violence one may feel within. Another important factor is that their activities make them one with Nature and the natural material they handle. However, this phenomenon is no longer as powerful as it was

before society became as materialistic as it is today. But the truth of the matter is still relevant and this can be observed through children.

Education through Aesthetic Activities

The crucial point is that unless we as individuals consider ourselves as part of the *whole*, we cannot experience the *whole*, which is the ultimate aim of the human mind. And without that experience we cannot be happy and feel fulfilled. Art actually assists in creating the desired unity with the Universe. Let us see how the dynamics works.

I can give an endless number of examples of children's capacity to get totally absorbed, not only in the act of painting or doing any other art activity, but in the drama that is the subject matter of a picture or model. A child of ten once made a picture of a landscape with a bullock tied to a tree across a brook. A boy was trying to cross the brook to bring the animal to the shed as it had started raining. He was holding an umbrella. The boy slipped and fell down and the umbrella flew away. As this young artist was giving the finishing touches to his work of art, he suddenly kept it at a distance to have a good look at it. I was quietly observing him from a window. After placing the picture against a wall, he started moving backwards. His right hand assumed a position as if he had an umbrella in his hand. All of a sudden he acted as the falling boy and moved as if to catch an umbrella that had flown away. As an artist myself, and having known many a serious artist, I was able to understand the need of the boy to feel that what he was representing was his own reality.

According to Indian and Chinese aesthetics, it is of supreme importance that the maker should completely identify with the object that he or she makes. Writing on Chinese painting, Coomaraswamy states, "The Chinese artist does not merely observe but identifies with the landscape or whatever it may be that he will represent. The story is told of a famous painter of horses who was found one day in his studio rolling on his back like a horse, reminded that he might really become a horse; he ever afterwards painted only (the) Buddha. An icon is to be imitated not admired. In just the same way in India, the imager is required to identify himself in detail with the form to be represented. Such identification, indeed, is the final goal of any contemplation, reached only when the original distinction of subject breaks

down and there remains only the knowing, in which the knower and the known are merged.”

If what Coomaraswamy wrote seems at all strange to us (the Western and the Westernised), whose concept of knowledge is always objective, let us at least remember that an ‘identification’ was also presupposed in medieval European procedure; in Dante’s words, “He who would paint a figure, if he cannot be it, cannot draw it.”

At this juncture, I must make a point that I think is of some importance. Art here does not mean, what it is often understood to be. “Art today”, wrote Herbert Read, “is too often a wayward, partial, even perverse expression of universal harmony. It is too often but an expression of personal fantasies, of egoistic and aggressive impulses. It is prostituted to purposes which destroy aesthetic nature.” The idea here is to experience and develop the unity into which we are born, by learning from Nature, and in the process of creation, all the necessary information and knowledge is gathered. After all, creative activities are related to the external world. To make an efficient table, a pot, a house or music it is necessary to know arithmetic, even history and geography. The natural way to acquire that knowledge is through the unconscious discipline that is possible by aesthetic activities. It is this procedure that makes education an unconscious process and therefore, natural.

What I am trying to convey here is that to be able to experience and act, and act creatively and constructively, one has to be *predisposed* to taking certain steps in one’s life. These steps are not occasional acts in one’s life; one’s whole life is a series of these steps. I am asking no more than what Maria Montessori had suggested in her message to the International Congress against War and Militarism held in Paris in the month of August 1937. “If at some time the Child were to receive proper consideration and his immense possibilities were to be developed, then a Man might arise for whom there would be no need of encouragement to Disarmament and Resistance to War because his nature would be such that he could not Endure the state of degradation and of extreme moral corruption which makes possible any participation in war.”

Maria Montessori asks for a lifestyle and educational programme that would make individuals *predisposed* to a beautiful and peaceful society. It is exactly what

Nandalal Bose says in the quotation given at the beginning of this paper. *“Music, literature and art provide those possibilities which build healthy human attitudes. Rhythm and harmony between the specific and the whole - one and many - is their gift to humankind.”* One may call it a Utopia. Every time in history a revolutionary idea is born, it is first termed Utopia. But, haven’t we seen that only Utopias have succeeded?

13. EDUCATION FOR A PEACEFUL WORLD

A World without War

A former U.S. ambassador to Russia said in a speech last year: “We have gone on piling weapon upon weapon, missile upon missile ... like the victims of some sort of hypnotism, like men in a dream, like lemmings heading for the sea ...”

I want to ask a question: Why do we behave like lemmings? Why do we allow it to happen? Lord Mountbatten once asked: “How can we stand by and do nothing to prevent the destruction of our world. ... Do the frightening facts about the arms race, which show that we are rushing headlong towards a precipice, make any of those responsible for this disastrous course pull themselves together and reach for the brakes?” Mountbatten said that the answer is “NO”.

On 23rd October 1981, the evening before the great demonstration against nuclear weapons took place in London, Nicholas Humphrey gave the Bronowsky lecture on the BBC. He said: “I want to ask why the answer can be ‘No’... As a psychologist I am concerned with the feelings, perceptions and motives of individual human beings. When a lemming runs, it is not pushed or pulled by outside forces; it runs to its destruction on its own four feet. It is as individuals that we can and might apply the brakes, and as individuals that we can and do fail. Responsibility for this disastrous course begins right here.”

Unfortunately, not enough people are either mentally prepared or willing to take the responsibility on themselves as individuals to apply the brakes, to say, “No, I shall not allow it”. As an educationist and artist craftsman, I want to explore the reasons behind this inability in individuals to act and be counted.

Before going into the main thesis of this paper, I want to point out that we have used fear as a major tool of motivation. In religion, in education and in politics, fear has played a central role. But it has not worked. On the contrary, it has deadened our sensitivity and our humanity. Fear destroys initiative and spontaneity. It is not a reliable factor to be used for motivating people to act against evil and injustice. I should explain what I mean by fear not being a reliable factor to be used for motivating people to act. Here I shall give an example.

In 1943, Bengal suffered from very severe floods. As student volunteers, some of us went to the nearby affected villages to do relief work. Water levels were rising rapidly when two of us reached a house, which already had two feet of water around it. There was a pair of bullocks and a cart in the yard. Two small children were scraping the last grains of rice from a bowl on the verandah, which would also soon be submerged under water. The family could load the cart with their possessions in five or six minutes but they had not done it when we reached them. We tried to persuade them to come with us to a safe place. There was no response whatsoever. The picture of that moment has been engraved so deeply in my mind that I can never forget it. There was death standing right in front of them, and by their side there were people to help - asking and persuading them to escape. Yet the family, especially the couple, young and strong in looks, and an old man, perhaps the grandfather of the children (who were too young to know what was happening), stood completely stunned with no wish left to move. Death for them had reached so close that all motivation to live had evaporated. We had to actually drag them away, which was easy enough because they had no resistance left in them. There seems to be a borderline somewhere in the middle of the scale of fear, which neutralises motivation, and beyond which there develops a mechanism against any thought of fear. At that point, one loses all initiative.

Nicholas Humphrey cites an experience. "When I was a child, we had an old pet tortoise called Ajax. One autumn Ajax, doubtless looking for a winter home, crawled unnoticed into the pile of wood and bracken my father was collecting for Guy Fawkes' Day. As days passed and more and more pieces of tinder were added to the pile, Ajax must have felt more and more secure; everyday he was getting greater protection from the frost and rain. On 5 November, the bonfire was lit and the tortoise was reduced to ashes." Are there some of us who still believe that the piling up of weapons- upon weapons adds to our security - that the dangers are nothing compared to the assurance they provide?

Recently, I studied the various activities and publications of the peace movements in different parts of the world. And I am extremely impressed by the quality of information these movements are providing to the experts as well as the public on the dangers of wars in general, and nuclear weapons in particular. It seems that today we have all the information, technical and political, about the destructibility

of war, and also of the means to communicate that information to the masses of population around the world. And, yet, when it comes to taking drastic action against the dangers that hang on our heads, most of us lack the courage to say as individuals: "I shall not allow it to happen".

Moral Self-Discipline

The thesis is that a warless world cannot be created by providing information and developing intellectual virtues, but by fostering *moral self-discipline* and by adopting an *aesthetic approach to education* for developing man to his full humanity.

A person may have all the knowledge as to how to act in a given situation but be unable to control his or her impulses and desires. One may have all the understanding but be a creature of bad habits. Knowledge and self-discipline are, therefore, two different virtues. Intellectual virtue can be codified and generally accepted as a system of beliefs and customs, but moral virtue is the inner dynamics of our psychological make-up. It is necessary to explain the word *moral* that I have used here. Unfortunately, the concept of morality is largely attached to religion or understood as rationalistic or legalistic codification of right and wrong. But, morality is neither a mystery nor a judgement. It is the exercise of free choice. It is a spontaneous act of volition. Its basis is neither in faith nor in reason, but in a particular kind of discipline. The only problem is how to develop that kind of discipline and to ensure that the right choice will be made.

I agree with all those psychoanalysts who give great importance to awareness. However, their position is based on rationality. But I do not think that awareness can generate the *will to act*. As has been stated earlier - in spite of all the possible awareness, it is very hard to take an action, which is certain to cause pain. Have we not seen time and again that many a great intellectual and student of human behaviour and mind has failed to take action against gross human suffering and injustice for fear of reprisal from the establishment. How many of them have often sold their souls experience. Creative activities cannot be spontaneous without such a relationship. Nor can such relationships be created in an environment that is divisive - between man and man and between man and Nature - and therefore deadly.

Let nobody jump to the conclusion that I expect that once creative activities become the centre of education, a world without war will come into being and a new lifestyle will emerge. I am suggesting no such thing. What I wish to convey is this: to abolish war it is essential that men and women must be predisposed to peace, i.e., free and courageous enough to choose the path of love and unity with all human beings, instead of the path of hatred and fragmentation of human society.

What I have tried to convey here is that the path to that kind of development is of aesthetic discipline - the path of creativity. Unless more and more men and women are able to realise "the state of degradation and of extreme moral corruption which makes possible any participation in war", and are able to experience goodness and harmony within themselves, people will easily be deceived and put down. There is only one way to peace and that is to "condition" ourselves to peace and human unity right from the early years of our lives.

References

1. Also see Herbert Read, *Education for Peace*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1950, p. 49.
- 2 Plato, *The Republic*, Penguin Books, 1980.
- 3 Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man*, Kegan Paul, London, 1947.

Sources of Articles

1. What is Education? Key note address at the seminar 'Elementary Education - Shaping a Vision', at Lady Sri Ram College, New Delhi, 2001.
2. Art: The Basis of Education. Chapter from the book *Art: The Basis of Education* by Devi Prasad, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1998.
3. Seeds of Growth. Article in *The Journal of Psychological Foundation*, Vol. 1(2), New Delhi, December 1999, pp. 1-3.
4. Window to the World of the Child. Based on a paper titled 'Child and Adult - Two Entirely Different Worlds', presented at the workshop - Design in Child Development, at the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, December 1999.
5. Gandhi the Educator. Based on an article from the book, *Fifty Major Thinkers on Education, From Confucius to Dewey*, Ed. Joy A. Palmer, Routledge, London, 2001, pp. 219-224.
6. Gandhi's Nayee Talim. Chapter from the book *The Cultural Dimension of Education*, Ed. Kapila Vatsayan, Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi, 1998, pp. 171-190.
7. Tagore's Warning. A talk given at the Hampstead Garden Institute, London, March 1980, and also published in *Gandhi Vigyan*, No.1, New Delhi, Oct. 1983, pp. 30-38.
8. Gandhi's Educational Revolution. Article in *Christian Action*, Gandhi Centenary Issue, London, 1969, pp.10-14.
9. True Education is Education for Satyagraha, London, 1980.
10. Education for a Non-violent Social Order. Chapter in *On the Frontiers: Strategy for a New Social Order*, Ed. K. Arunachalam and C. Sadler, Kodal Publishers, Madurai, India, 1977, pp. 169-180.
11. Education for Human Rights and Social Responsibility. Article in '*The Indian Journal of Adult Education*', Vol. 48, No. 4, New Delhi, Oct-Dec. 1987, pp. 48-52.
12. Creative Hence a Peaceful Society. Extracted from *Culture of Peace*, No. 6, Ed. Kapila Vatsayan, Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi, 1999, pp. 57-68.
13. Education for a Peaceful World, London, 1981.

Published Works by Devi Prasad

Prasad, D. *Bacchon ki Kala aur Shiksha* (Hindi), 1959, All India Sarva Seva Sangh Publications, Varanasi, India, 1959.

Prasad, D. *Pagdandi* (Hindi translation of Rabindranath Tagore's *Lipika*), Rajpal and Sons, Delhi, 1961.

Prasad, D. *Peace Making and Peace Education - A Bibliography* first published in Hindi in *Nayee Talim*; later as a mimeographed pamphlet by War Resisters' International (WRI), London in 1963.

Prasad, D. and Smythe, T. (Eds.) *Conscription: A World Survey* WRI Publication, London, 1968.

Prasad, D. (Ed.) *Handbook of Human Rights* WRI Publication, London, 1968.

Prasad, D. (Ed.) *Gramdan: The Land Revolution of India* WRI Publication, London, 1969.

Prasad, D. (Ed.) *Problems of Aid and Development* WRI Publication, London, 1970.

Prasad, D. *They Love it but Leave it: American Deserters* WRI Publication, London, 1971.

Prasad, D. (Ed.) *Fifty Years of War Resistance: What Now?* WRI Publication, London, 1972.

Prasad, D. *Peace Education or Education for Peace*, Gandhi Peace Foundation Publication, New Delhi, 1984.

Prasad, D. *Rabindranath ki Shiksha aur Chitrakala* (Hindi), National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1986, also translated into English by the author as *Rabindranath Tagore: Educational Philosophy and Painting* National Book Trust, 2000. (*Its Gujarati and Bengali editions will soon be published*).

Prasad, D. (Ed.) *Nayee Talim ka Sandesh*, Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, 1988.

Prasad, D. *Contemporary Indian Potters/Ceramic Artists – A Directory, 1996-97*, Aaditya Chandra Prakashan, New Delhi, 1996.

Prasad, D. *Art: the Basis of Education* National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1998. Hindi edition, published by the NBT Shiksha ka Vahan: Kala, 1999. The book is soon to be published in Thai language from Bangkok.

Prasad, D. *War is a Crime against Humanity: Story of War Resisters' International*. To be published soon.

Prasad, D. *Potters! Make your Own Tools and Equipment* Mosaic Books, New Delhi, 2005.

About Author

Devi Prasad graduated from Rabindranath Tagore's school in Santiniketan. He participated in the Quit India Struggle and Vinoba Bhave's Gramdan movement. In 1944, he joined Gandhiji's ashram, Sevagram, where he worked on child art and education and also edited *Nayee Talim* till 1962. He became Secretary General of War Resisters' International, London, and later its Chairman (1962-1975). He returned to his art activity as a potter in 1972 and continued working with the peace movement.

He came back to India in 1983 with his wife Bindu Prasad and established his pottery studio in New Delhi. Since then, he has been a teacher of pottery and has been instrumental in making studio pottery a viable Indian artistic activity. Devi Prasad has taught Ceramics and Peace Studies at various universities, including Viswa Bharati. He has several publications on subjects such as Gramdan, child art, Tagore's philosophy on education and art, peace education and the anti-war movement.