

EDUCATION **& PHILOSOPHY** **IDEALISM**

✓ *Philosophical Approaches*

✓ *Role of Idealism in Education*

Let's Study Together



MEANING OF PHILOSOPHY

- Origin of the Word

- • Greek roots: philos (love) + sophia (wisdom).
- • Philosophy therefore translates to “love of wisdom.”

- According to **Plato**

The man who engages himself in searching for wisdom truth or facts is called a **philosopher**.

SOME DEFINITION OF PHILOSOPHY

Philosopher	Definition / View of Philosophy
Aristotle	Philosophy is a science which discovers the real nature of super natural elements.
Plato	Philosophy is the pursuit of truth and the Good, achieved through dialectic and contemplation of eternal Forms. It is a way to rise from opinion to true knowledge.
Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan	Philosophy is not mere speculation but a spiritual discipline that interprets religious experience and bridges Indian and Western thought. He saw it as a way to realize the unity of spirit and promote ethical living.
John Dewey	Philosophy is a method of solving problems of human experience, rooted in pragmatism. It is not abstract theory but reflective inquiry that helps humans adapt to their environment.
Immanuel Kant	Philosophy is the critical examination of reason itself. It asks: What can I know? What should I do? What may I hope? He emphasized that philosophy sets limits to knowledge and grounds universal moral law.
Rabindranath Tagore	Philosophy is a humanistic and spiritual worldview, emphasizing freedom, creativity, and harmony with the universal Being. He saw it as a poetic way of connecting the self with the infinite.
Aristotle	Philosophy is the science of causes and principles of all things, seeking knowledge of reality through reason and reflection.
Johann Gottlieb Fichte	Philosophy is the science of knowledge (Wissenschaftslehre),

WHAT PHILOSOPHY STUDIES

-  Metaphysics

- • Meaning: The branch of philosophy that studies the nature of reality and existence.
- • Key Questions: What is real? What is the nature of being? Does God exist? What is time and space?
- • Examples:
- • Aristotle's study of "being qua being."
- • Questions about the soul, mind, and universe.

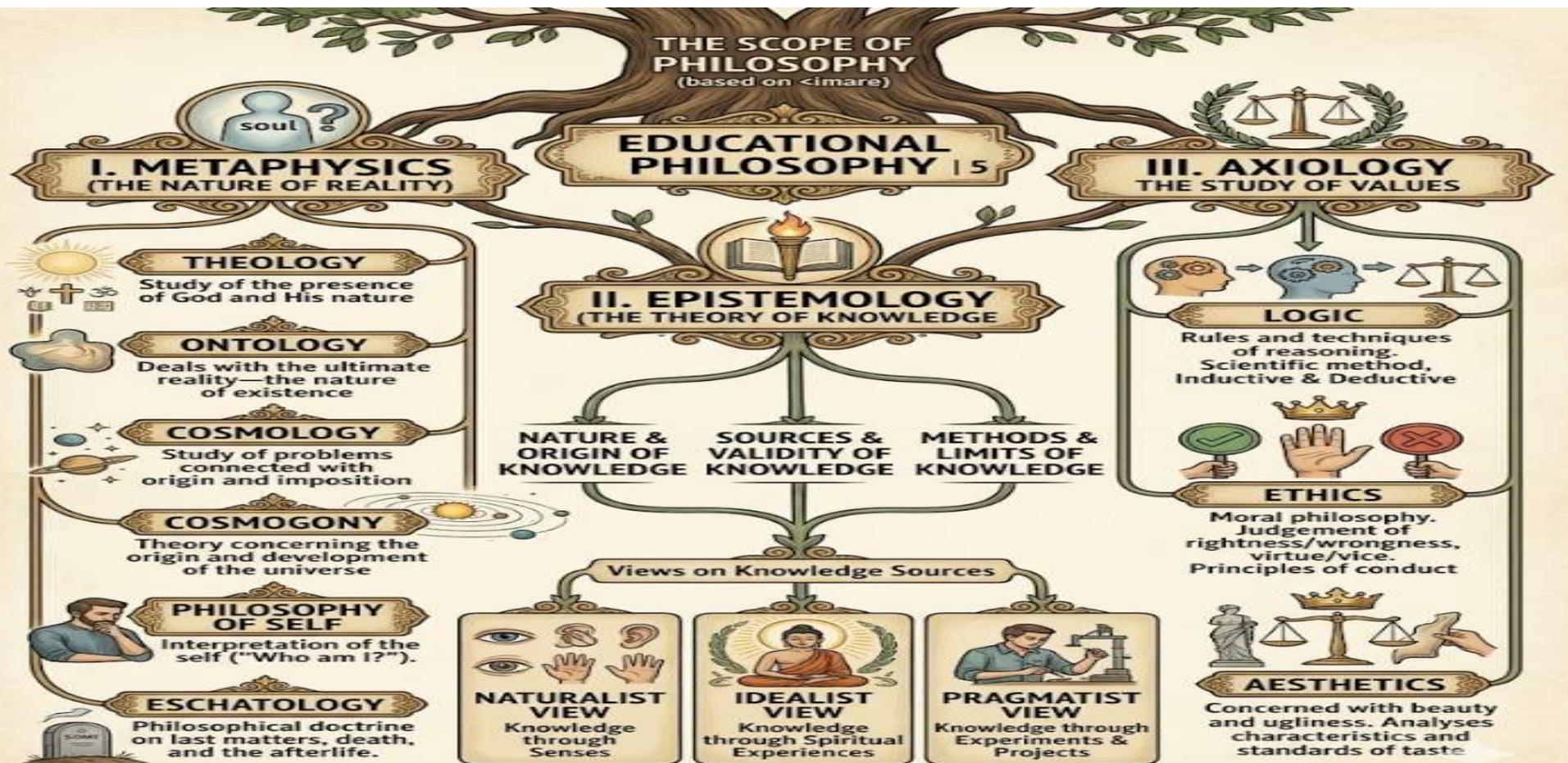
-  Epistemology

- • Meaning: The study of knowledge, truth, and belief.
- • Key Questions: What can we know? How do we know it? What is truth? What is the difference between opinion and knowledge?
- • Examples:
- • Plato's idea of knowledge as "justified true belief."
- • Skepticism (can we know anything for certain?).
- • Modern debates about science, perception, and artificial intelligence.

-  Axiology

- • Meaning: The branch of philosophy concerned with values—both ethical and aesthetic.

FURTHER SUBDIVISION (GRAPHICAL)



FURTHER SUBDIVISION

- I. Metaphysics (The Nature of Reality)
 - * Theology: Study of the nature of God and the divine.
 - * Ontology: Study of the ultimate nature of existence.
 - * Cosmology: Study of the origin and imposition of the universe.
 - * Cosmogony: Theory regarding the creation and development of the world.
 - * Philosophy of Self: Interpretation of the "self" (e.g., "Who am I?").
 - * Eschatology: Study of final matters, death, and the afterlife.
- II. Epistemology (The Theory of Knowledge)
 - * Nature of Knowledge: What is knowledge?
 - * Sources of Knowledge: How do we get it?
 - * Validity of Knowledge: How do we prove it is true?
 - * Naturalist View: Knowledge through Senses.
 - * Idealist View: Knowledge through Spiritual Experience.
 - * Pragmatist View: Knowledge through Experiments/Projects.
- III. Axiology (The Study of Values)
 - * Logic: The rules and techniques of reasoning (Inductive & Deductive).
 - * Ethics: Moral philosophy; judging right vs. wrong, virtue vs. vice.
 - * Aesthetics: The study of beauty, taste, and standards of ugliness

IDEALISM

- Idealism= 'Idea'+ 'Ism' (It is believed that 'I' is added by plato)
- Idealism is also known as spiritualism.
- Plato is widely considered the "father of idealism" in philosophy. The ancient Greek philosopher proposed that true reality consists of abstract ideas and forms (the intelligible world) rather than the physical world we perceive through senses. His philosophy argues that material objects are mere reflections or shadows of perfect, eternal forms.
- Core belief: **Ideas have ultimate supremacy.**

PROTAGONISTS

- Ancient Greek Foundations
 - Socrates → Stressed moral values and self-knowledge.
 - Plato → Father of Objective Idealism; eternal Forms are true reality.
- Rationalists & Early Moderns
 - René Descartes → “Cogito, ergo sum”; mind as foundation of knowledge.
 - Baruch Spinoza → Reality as one substance, understood through reason.
 - Comenius → Educational reformer, linked spiritual ideals with pedagogy.
- German Idealists
 - Immanuel Kant → Phenomenal Idealism; reality shaped by categories of mind.
 - Johann Fichte → Self (ego) as absolute reality.
 - G.W.F. Hegel → Absolute Idealism; dialectical process (thesis–antithesis–synthesis).
 - F.W.J. Schelling → Nature and spirit as unified reality.
- Other Notable Western Thinkers
 - George Berkeley → Subjective Idealism; “to be is to be perceived.”
 - Giovanni Gentile → Actual Idealism; reality as pure act of thought.
 - Pestalozzi & Froebel → Applied idealist principles to education.
 - T.H. Green → Ethical idealism; moral development as central.
 - W.T. Harris → American idealist, emphasized education and culture.
- IN Indian Protagonists of Idealism
 - Indian philosophers integrated idealistic principles with spiritual and educational reform.
- Ancient & Classical Roots
 - Kapil (Samkhya tradition) → Early metaphysical speculation on spirit and matter.
 - Guru Nanak → Stressed unity of God, spiritual truth, and moral living.
- Modern Visionaries
 - Mahatma Gandhi → Moral and spiritual development through truth (Satya) and non-violence (Ahimsa).
 - Rabindranath Tagore → Unity of man and nature; holistic education.
 - Swami Vivekananda → Education as manifestation of perfection already in man.
 - Sri Aurobindo Ghosh → Evolution of consciousness; integral idealism.
 - S. Radhakrishnan → Interpreted Indian idealism for modern philosophy.
 - Dayananda Saraswati → Revival of Vedic ideals; spiritual reform.

DEFINITIONS

- • D.M. Dutta: “Idealism holds that ultimate reality is spiritualism.”
- • H.B. Titus: “Idealism asserts that reality consists of ideas, thoughts, minds, or selves rather than material objects and forces.”
- • J.S. Ross: “Idealistic philosophy takes many and varied forms, but the postulate underlying all this is that mind or spirit is the essential world stuff, that the true reality is of a mental character.”
- • Brubacher: “Idealists point out that it is mind that is central in understanding the world. To them nothing gives a greater sense of reality than the activity of the mind engaged in trying to comprehend the world.”
- • Horne: “Educational philosophy of idealism is an account of man finding himself as an integral part of a universe of mind.”
- • Rusk: “Idealism contends that the material and physical universe known to science is an incomplete expression of reality that it exists but to subserve and requires to complement it a higher level of reality, a spiritual universe.”



• Features of Idealism

- 🌟 Core Principles
 - True reality = ideas; ideas are more important than material things.
 - God is the source of all creation and knowledge.
 - Spirit and mind constitute reality.
 - Man is the best creation of God, an incarnation of divine power.
 - Man is a spiritual being with inner spiritual power.
 - Wisdom/mental attitude is the means of attaining truth.
 - Material universe is unreal and perishable.
 - Soul and God are indestructible and immortal.
 - Spiritual values are eternal, absolute, and unchanging.
 - Human personality is exalted above environment.
- Reality is found in the mind, not in material nature.
- Eternal values: Truth, Goodness, Beauty.
- Belief in unity in diversity.
- Greater importance to moral and spiritual education.
- Study of man's nature and mind > study of material universe.
- Education prepares child for holy life.
- Objects are not ultimately real; only the idea behind them is real.
- Division of world:
 - Material world → unreal, mortal.
 - Spiritual world → real, immortal.
- Man has intelligence to mould and modify surroundings.

• Forms of Idealism

• ◆ Personalistic Idealism (Subjective Idealism)

- George Berkeley is the main exponent.
- Only the mind exists; attributes and qualities are mental.
- Reality is subjective — each person defines objects in their own way.
- Example: What we perceive is shaped by our personal mental interpretation.

• ◆ Absolute Idealism

- Fichte and Hegel are the exponents.
- Self (soul) is the absolute reality.
- World events governed by absolute laws.
- Progress explained through dialectical process: thesis → antithesis → synthesis.
- Goal: reach absolute truth by synthesizing contradictions.

• ◆ Objective Idealism

- Plato is the originator.
- Reality of spirit is independent of human perception.
- Example: God remains real whether or not anyone acknowledges Him.
- Principle: “There is no God without world and no world without God.”

• ◆ Phenomenal Idealism

- Immanuel Kant is the exponent.
- Knowledge of the world is only phenomenal, not absolute.
- Absolute reality (God, heaven, hell) is beyond human capacity to know.
- We only grasp appearances, not the “thing-in-itself.” environment.



IDEALISM IN EDUCATION

- • Plato introduced idealism into education.
- • Great importance given to the study of man and his mind.
- • Human personality considered the most worthy subject of study.
- • Emerson: “Man is everything, environment is nothing.”
- • Rusk: Education enlarges the boundaries of spiritual realism.
- • Idealists (Plato, Pestalozzi, Froebel) → Education leads to highest moral conduct and deepest spiritual insight (truth, goodness, beauty).
- • Education acts as a link between individual mind and spiritual environment.
- • Ross: “The function of education is to help us in our exploration of the ultimate universal values so that the truth of the universe may become our truth and give power to our life.”

Aims of Education in Idealism

◇ 1. Self-Realisation

- ◇ • Central aim of idealistic education.
- ◇ • Man is the most beautiful and powerful creation of God.
- ◇ • Indian thinkers:
 - ◇ • Shankaracharya → “Education is the realisation of the self.”
 - ◇ • Swami Vivekananda → “Education is the realisation of divine perfection already existing in man.”
 - ◇ • Sri Aurobindo → “Education helps the growing soul to draw out that is in itself.”
- ◇ • Western thinkers:
 - ◇ • James S. Ross → “The aim of education is to enable man to become true himself.”
 - ◇ • Aristotle → Education develops man’s faculties to contemplate supreme truth, goodness, and beauty.

◇ 2. Universal Education

- ◇ • Education is the birthright of every individual.
- ◇ • Every person must get opportunities to realise their highest potential.
- ◇ • Leads to the formation of an ideal society.
- ◇ • Idealists strongly support universalisation of education.

◇ 3. Spiritual Development

- ◇ • Greater importance to spiritual values than material attainments.
- ◇ • Education should develop the child mentally, morally, and spiritually.
- ◇ • Rusk: “Education must enable mankind through its culture to enter more and more fully into the spiritual realm.”

◇ 4. Physical Development

- ◇ • Physical fitness is essential for spiritual exaltation.
- ◇ • James Ross: “The health and fitness of the body must receive attention, for without such health and fitness, the pursuit of spiritual values is seriously handicapped.”

◇ 5. Preparation for Holy Life

- ◇ • Education should prepare children to lead a holy, pure, and faithful life.
- ◇ • Froebel: “The object of education is the realisation of a faithful, pure, inviolable and hence holy life.”

Aims of Education in Idealism-2

Intellectual Development

- Aim: Develop the child's mental and intellectual powers.
- Helps achieve creativity, control, and adjustment with environment.
- Essential for undertaking jobs and occupations in society.

Moral Development

- Education should cultivate morality in the child.
- Enables distinction between right and wrong.
- Only morally endowed citizens can ensure peace and progress.
- Dr. Prem Nath: "The process of education must lead to the deepest spiritual insight and to the highest moral and spiritual conduct."

Preservation & Transmission of Culture

- Idealists emphasize cultural heritage as essential for humanity.
- Education preserves, develops, and transmits culture to future generations.
- Man's achievements in science, art, and culture are of intrinsic value.

Development of Inventive & Creative Powers

- Man should modify nature to suit his needs.
- Education must foster inventive powers to ensure mastery over materials.
-  Simple Living & High Thinking
- Education should train the mind for simplicity in life and lofty ideals.
- Material wealth and fashion are secondary compared to intellectual and spiritual growth.

Unity in Diversity

- Education must foster national integration and international understanding.
- Encourages sacrifice of individual interests for social welfare.
- Promotes unity among human beings.

Cultivation of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness

- Central aim: Encourage pursuit of eternal values.
- Truth → intellectual activity.
- Beauty → aesthetic activity.
- Goodness → moral activity.
- Leads to self-realisation.

Idealism and Curriculum

Curriculum Principles

- Curriculum is the means to realise the aims of education.
- Idealists give more importance to thoughts, feelings, ideals, and values than to mere activities.
- Curriculum should reflect humanity's experiences and eternal values: Truth, Goodness, Beauty.
- These values determine four types of human activities:
 - Intellectual
 - Moral
 - Aesthetic
 - Physical

Subjects Emphasized

- Humanities, languages, social sciences, physical sciences, ethics, metaphysics, religion, art, and poetry.
- Physical education is also included (health, hygiene, gymnastics, athletics) → because spiritual pursuit requires physical fitness.

Developmental Focus

- Curriculum should develop three faculties of the mind:
 - Knowing → through literature, history, science, mathematics (truth).
 - Willing → through arts, music, dance, drawing (beauty).
 - Doing → through science and practical activities (goodness/competence).

Schemes of Curriculum by Idealists

◆ Plato's Scheme:

- ◆ Aim of life = realise God through truth, beauty, goodness.
- ◆ Subjects: language, literature, history, geography, mathematics, science (intellectual); arts/music/poetry (aesthetic); religion/ethics/metaphysics (moral/spiritual).

◆ Herbert's Scheme:

- ◆ Aim = promotion of moral values.
- ◆ Priority to literature, history, arts, music, poetry, political economy.
- ◆ Science subjects given secondary place.

◆ T.P. Nunn's Scheme:

- ◆ School should promote morality and preserve historical tradition.
- ◆ Group 1: physical, social, moral, religious activities (physical education, culture, sociology, ethics, religion).
- ◆ Group 2: literary and aesthetic subjects (arts, literature, music, handicraft, history, geography, science, mathematics).

Idealism and Method of Teaching

📚 Teaching Methods in Idealism

- No single fixed method; choice depends on aims and situation.
- Different idealists used different methods:
- Socrates → Question–Answer method.
- Plato → Discourse method.
- Aristotle → Inductive–Deductive method.
- Descartes → Simple-to-complex method.
- Pestalozzi → Observation method.
- Froebel → Play-way method.
- Herbert → Instruction method.

🏠 Classroom Concept

- Classroom = temple of spiritual learning.
- Meeting place of human minds.
- Place for self-education and self-realisation.
- Pupils must gain knowledge to understand themselves.

🎓 Suggested Techniques

- Narration
- Explanation
- Exposition
- Questioning
- Discussion
- Play-way
- Observation
- Practice and repetition

🌟 Key Idea

- Butler: “Idealists consider themselves as creators and determiners of methods, not devotees of any one of these methods.”
- Flexibility in teaching methods is central to idealism



Idealism and Teacher

- ◇  Role of the Teacher
 - ◇ • Teacher's position is very high and glorious in the educational process.
 - ◇ • Considered next to God.
 - ◇ • Guides the child from darkness of ignorance to light of knowledge.
 - ◇ • Acts as a Guru — spiritual guide and mentor.
- ◇  Qualities of the Teacher
 - ◇ • Must thoroughly understand pupils.
 - ◇ • Should possess high standards of behaviour.
 - ◇ • Needs deep subject knowledge.
 - ◇ • Gentile: "Teacher is a spiritual symbol of right conduct."
 - ◇ • Teacher should guide students with love, affection, and sympathy.
- ◇  Analogies
 - ◇ • Froebel: "The school is a garden, the teacher is a cautious gardener, and the child is a tender plant."
 - ◇ • Teacher ensures the child grows to the finest possible perfection.
- ◇  Respect & Prestige
 - ◇ • Teacher enjoys prestige and respect in society.
 - ◇ • J.S. Ross: "The Naturalists may be contented with briars, but the Idealists want to find roses."
 - ◇ • Idealists expect teachers to cultivate the best qualities in students..

Idealism and Student, Discipline, and School

Student in Idealism

- ◆ • Child = limited soul → must be transformed into an unlimited soul through education.
- ◆ • Student should obey teacher's dictates.
- ◆ • Expected qualities: respect, dedication, meditation, regularity, moderation (less food/sleep), careful speech, wisdom, reverence for teacher.
- ◆ • B.B. Bogoslovasky: "The student is a finite person growing when properly educated into the image of an infinite person."
- ◆ • Teacher–student relationship is cordial and spiritual.

Discipline in Idealism

- ◆ • Discipline is essential for spiritual development.
- ◆ • Wrong actions → punishment; good deeds → no reward (doing good is expected).
- ◆ • No free discipline; emphasis on self-insight and self-analysis.
- ◆ • Self-discipline developed through teacher's exemplary conduct.
- ◆ • Thomas & Lang: "Freedom is the cry of Naturalists while discipline is that of Idealists."
- ◆ • Discipline = slogan of Idealists; regulated liberty allowed for spiritual growth.

School in Idealism

- ◆ • School based on simple living and high thinking.
- ◆ • Place where logical thinking, reasoning, and evaluation are developed.
- ◆ • Meeting place of souls of teachers and students.
- ◆ • Acts as leader and reformer for society.
- ◆ • Promotes patriotism, humanity, devotion to God, and religiousness.
- ◆ • School = temple of spiritual learning, a place for self-education and self-realisation.
- ◆ • Built on ideal imagination to guide the educational process.

Contributions of Idealism to Education

◆ Aims of Education

- ◆ • Idealism helped in determining educational aims.
- ◆ • Aim: personality development through self-realisation and creation of an ideal society.
- ◆ • Influenced curriculum design and teaching techniques.
- ◆ • Religious and moral education emphasized in Indian schools.

◆ Teacher

- ◆ • Teacher given a place of pride and respect.
- ◆ • Idealism stresses the ideal character of the teacher.
- ◆ • Teacher's role is crucial in shaping student behaviour.
- ◆ • Raised respect for teachers in Indian schools.

◆ Child

- ◆ • Recognizes the individuality of the child.
- ◆ • Stimulates creative potentialities.
- ◆ • Focus on developing eternal values in the child.
- ◆ • Adopted widely in curriculum and teaching methods.

◆ Teacher–Student Relation

- ◆ • Advocates intimate relationship between teacher and student.
- ◆ • Modern education reflects this through reduced teacher–student ratios.
- ◆ • Shows influence of idealism in today's practices.

◆ Discipline

- ◆ • Emphasizes self-discipline.
- ◆ • Adopted by modern philosophers and Indian thinkers like Gandhi and Vivekananda.
- ◆ • Still emphasized in education today.

Merits of Idealism

- ◇ • Ancient & Comprehensive Philosophy
- ◇ • Idealism is the oldest and most profound philosophy.
- ◇ • Its contributions to educational thought are solid and far-reaching.
- ◇ • Higher Place to Mental & Spiritual Qualities
- ◇ • Emphasizes spiritual and mental development over the physical world.
- ◇ • Aim of education = perfection of the individual.
- ◇ • Spiritual Insight & Moral Conduct
- ◇ • Leads learners toward the highest moral and spiritual conduct.
- ◇ • Encourages deep spiritual understanding.
- ◇ • Stress on Self-Realisation
- ◇ • Essential for acquiring knowledge of the spiritual world.
- ◇ • Education = pathway to discovering the true self.
- ◇ • Guidance for Simple Living & High Thinking
- ◇ • Promotes simplicity in lifestyle and loftiness in thought.
- ◇ • Encourages balance between earthly life and spiritual life.
- ◇ • Preparation for Heavenly & Earthly Life
- ◇ • Idealism prepares individuals for both spiritual (heavenly) and practical (earthly) existence.
- ◇ • Teacher's Exalted Position
- ◇ • Teacher placed next to God in the educational process.
- ◇ • Seen as a guide to spiritual and moral development.
- ◇ • Knowledge of Self & Spiritual Freedom
- ◇ • Contains the highest knowledge: self, divine, cosmic, spiritual life.
- ◇ • Leads to freedom of mind.
- ◇ • Human Personality Development
- ◇ • Focus on personality growth → improves human relations in teaching.
- ◇ • Educational Institutions as Value-Centres
- ◇ • Schools become places for cultivating truth, beauty, and goodness.
- ◇ • Leads to moral character development in children.
- ◇ • Influence on Philosophers
- ◇ • Determined the path of many educational philosophers.
- ◇ • Supported by great thinkers worldwide and applied in practice.

Demerits and Criticism of Idealism

- ◇ - Too Abstract
- ◇ - Deals with ideas, spirit, and metaphysics rather than practical realities.
- ◇ - Often ignores the material world and scientific progress.
- ◇ - Neglect of Science & Technology
- ◇ - Gives secondary importance to physical sciences.
- ◇ - Inadequate for modern, industrial, and technological society.
- ◇ - Overemphasis on Spiritual Values
- ◇ - Focuses excessively on truth, beauty, and goodness.
- ◇ - Neglects vocational, technical, and practical education.
- ◇ - Rigid Discipline
- ◇ - Stresses strict discipline and obedience.
- ◇ - Limits freedom and creativity of students.
- ◇ - Teacher-Centric Approach
- ◇ - Teacher seen as supreme authority (next to God).
- ◇ - Reduces scope for learner autonomy and democratic participation.
- ◇ - Unrealistic Curriculum
- ◇ - Overloaded with literature, philosophy, religion, and arts.
- ◇ - Gives less importance to science, mathematics, and practical subjects.
- ◇ - Neglect of Environment
- ◇ - Emerson's view "Man is everything, environment is nothing" criticized.
- ◇ - Modern psychology and education emphasize environment's role in shaping personality.



CRITICISM OF IDEALISM

- • Naturalists: Criticize idealism for ignoring nature and environment.
- • Realists: Argue that idealism neglects material reality and practical life.
- • Pragmatists: Reject idealism's emphasis on eternal values, stressing utility and practical outcomes instead.
- • Modern Educators: Criticize idealism for being outdated in the age of science, democracy, and technology.



MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

• **1. WHO IS CONSIDERED THE FATHER OF IDEALISM?**

- (A) ARISTOTLE
- (B) PLATO
- (C) ROUSSEAU
- (D) JOHN DEWEY

• **2. ACCORDING TO IDEALISM, WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A TEACHER?**

- **ANSWER:**
THE TEACHER IS A GUIDE, FACILITATOR, AND SPIRITUAL GARDENER WHO HELPS THE STUDENT DISCOVER INNATE TRUTHS AND ACHIEVE SELF-REALISATION.

• **3. WHICH VALUE TRIAD IS CENTRAL TO IDEALISTIC PHILOSOPHY?**

- **ANSWER:**
TRUTH, BEAUTY, AND GOODNESS — THESE ETERNAL VALUES FORM THE FOUNDATION OF IDEALIST EDUCATION.

• **4. IDEALISM EMPHASIZES WHICH TYPE OF DISCIPLINE?**

- **ANSWER:**
INNER DISCIPLINE OR SELF-DISCIPLINE, DEVELOPED THROUGH MORAL INSIGHT AND SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE RATHER THAN EXTERNAL CONTROL.

• **5. WHICH TEACHING METHOD IS MOST ASSOCIATED WITH IDEALISM?**

- (A) LEARNING BY DOING
- (B) SOCRATIC METHOD / DISCUSSION
- (C) TRIAL AND ERROR
- (D) PROJECT METHOD

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