

All India Magazine
April 2018

**Sowing Seeds
of the Future**



Assisting the slow entries of the gods,
Sowing in young minds immortal thoughts they lived,
Taught the great Truth to which man's race must rise
Or opened the gates of freedom to a few.
Imparting to our struggling world the Light
They breathed like spirits from Time's dull yoke released,
Comrades and vessels of the cosmic Force,
Using a natural mastery like the sun's:
Their speech, their silence was a help to earth.

Savitri 32-33, p.383

Sri Aurobindo

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Sowing Seeds of the Future

Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face. — Sri Aurobindo

Contents

Seeds of a New Education	...	5
A New Education for a New Consciousness	...	17
The New Way	...	24
A Soul-based Education	...	41
Sutras on Education	...	48

Editorial: Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2018. In this issue we share the Mother's Light on Education that can build the humanity of today into the superhumanity of tomorrow. A brief historical background of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education is as follows:

Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education

On 2 December 1943, the Mother formally opened a school for about twenty children. She herself was one of the teachers. The number of pupils gradually increased during the next seven years.

On 24 April 1951, the Mother presided over a convention where it was resolved to establish an “international university centre”. On 6 January 1952, she inaugurated the Sri Aurobindo International University Centre. The name was changed in 1959 to the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education. ...

The Centre of Education does not award degrees or diplomas, since it seeks to awaken in its students a joy of learning and an aspiration for progress that are independent of outer motives.

CWM 12: 109-10

The Mother



When, as a child, I used to complain to my mother about food or any such small matter she would always tell me to go and do my work or pursue my studies instead of bothering about trifles. She would ask me if I had the complacent idea that I was born for comfort. "You are born to realise the highest Ideal," she would say and send me packing. She was quite right, though of course her notion of the highest Ideal was rather poor by our standards. We are all born for the highest Ideal...

CWM 3: 131

The Mother

Seeds of a New Education

Laying a strong foundation

The first necessity for the building up of a great intellectual superstructure is to provide a foundation strong enough to bear it. Those systems of education which start from an insufficient knowledge of man, think they have provided a satisfactory foundation when they have supplied the student with a large or well-selected mass of information on the various subjects which comprise the best part of human culture at the time. The school gives the materials, it is for the student to use them, — this is the formula. But the error here is fundamental. Information cannot be the foundation of intelligence, it can only be part of the material out of which the knower builds knowledge, the starting-point, the nucleus of fresh discovery and enlarged creation. An education that confines itself to imparting knowledge, is no education. The various faculties of memory, judgment, imagination, perception, reasoning, which build the edifice of thought and knowledge for the knower, must not only be equipped with their fit and sufficient tools and materials, but trained to bring fresh materials and use more skilfully those of which they are in possession. And the foundation of the structure they have to build, can only be the provision of a fund of force and energy sufficient to bear the demands of a continually growing activity of the memory, judgment and creative power.

CWSA 1: 369-370

Sri Aurobindo

Education to be complete must have five principal aspects corresponding to the five principal activities of the human being: the physical, the vital, the mental, the psychic and the spiritual. Usually, these phases of education follow chronologically the growth of the individual; this, however, does not mean that one of them should replace another, but that all must continue, completing one another until the end of his life.... *CWM 12:9*

Man is not separate from the universe

The ancient Aryans knew that man was not separate from the universe, but only a homogeneous part of it, as a wave is part of the ocean. An infinite energy, Prakriti, Maya or Shakti, pervades the world, pours itself into every name and form, and the clod, the plant, the insect, the animal, the man are, in their phenomenal existence, merely more or less efficient *ādhāras* of this Energy. We are each of us a dynamo into which waves of that energy have been generated and stored, and are being perpetually conserved, used up and replenished. The same force which moves in the star and the planet, moves in us, and all our thought and action are merely its play and born of the complexity of its functionings. There are processes by which man can increase his capacity as an *ādhāra*. There are other processes by which he can clear of obstructions the channel of communication between himself and the universal energy and bring greater and greater stores of it pouring into his soul and brain and body. This continual improvement of the *ādhāra* and increase in quantity and complexity of action of the informing energy, is the whole aim of evolution. When that energy is the highest in kind and the fullest in amount of which the human *ādhāra* is capable, and the *ādhāra* itself is trained utterly to bear the inrush and play of the energy, then is a man *siddha*, the fulfilled or perfect man, his evolution is over and he has completed in the individual that utmost development which the mass of humanity is labouring towards through the ages.

If this theory be correct, the energy at the basis of the operation of intelligence must be in ourselves and it must be capable of greater expansion and richer use to an extent practically unlimited. And this also must be a sound principle, that the more we can increase and enrich the energy, the greater will be the potential range, power and activity of the functions of our mind and the consequent vigour of our intellectuality and the greatness of

our achievement. This was the first principle on which the ancient Aryans based their education and one of the chief processes which they used for the increased storage of energy, was the practice of Brahmacharya.

CWSA 1: 370 – 71

The three principles of Education

The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught. The teacher is not an instructor or taskmaster, he is a helper and guide. His business is to suggest and not to impose. He does not actually train the pupil's mind, he only shows him how to perfect his instruments of knowledge and helps and encourages him in the process. He does not impart knowledge to him, he shows him how to acquire knowledge for himself. He does not call forth the knowledge that is within; he only shows him where it lies and how it can be habituated to rise to the surface. ...

The second principle is that the mind has to be consulted in its own growth. The idea of hammering the child into the shape desired by the parent or teacher is a barbarous and ignorant superstition. It is he himself who must be induced to expand in accordance with his own nature. There can be no greater error than for the parent to arrange beforehand that his son shall develop particular qualities, capacities, ideas, virtues, or be prepared for a prearranged career. To force the nature to abandon its own *dharma* is to do it permanent harm, mutilate its growth and deface its perfection. It is a selfish tyranny over a human soul and a wound to the nation, which loses the benefit of the best that a man could have given it and is forced to accept instead something imperfect and artificial, second-rate, perfunctory and common. Every man has in him something divine, something his own, a chance of strength and perfection in however small a sphere, which God offers him to take or refuse. The task is to find it, develop it, use it. The chief aim of education should be

to help the growing soul to draw out that in itself which is best and make it perfect for a noble use.

The third principle of education is to work from the near to the far, from that which is to that which shall be. The basis of a man's nature is almost always, in addition to his soul's past, his heredity, his surroundings, his nationality, his country, the soil from which he draws sustenance, the air which he breathes, the sights, sounds, habits to which he is accustomed. They mould him not the less powerfully because insensibly. From that then we must begin. We must not take up the nature by the roots from the earth in which it must grow or surround the mind with images and ideas of a life which is alien to that in which it must physically move. If anything has to be brought in from outside, it must be offered, not forced on the mind. A free and natural growth is the condition of genuine development.

CWSA 1: 384 - 385

Sri Aurobindo

There are souls which naturally revolt from their surroundings and seem to belong to another age and clime. Let them be free to follow their bent; but the majority languish, become empty, become artificial, if artificially moulded into an alien form. It is God's arrangement for mankind that they should belong to a particular nation, age, society, that they should be children of the past, possessors of the present, creators of the future. The past is our foundation, the present our material, the future our aim and summit. Each must have its due and natural place in a national system of education.

CWSA 1: 385

Sri Aurobindo



Inaugural Message for the Sri Aurobindo Memorial Convention

Sri Aurobindo is present in our midst, and with all the power of his creative genius he presides over the formation of the University Centre which for years he considered as one of the best means of preparing the future humanity to receive the supramental light that will transform the élite of today into a new race manifesting upon earth the new light and force and life.

In his name I open today this convention meeting here with the purpose of realising one of his most cherished ideals.

CWM 12:112

The Mother

Educate oneself to educate a child

Most parents, for various reasons, give very little thought to the true education which should be imparted to children. When they have brought a child into the world, provided him with food, satisfied his various material needs and looked after his health more or less carefully, they think they have fully discharged their duty. Later on, they will send him to school and hand over to the teachers the responsibility for his education.

There are other parents who know that their children must be educated and who try to do what they can. But very few, even among those who are most serious and sincere, know that the first thing to do, in order to be able to educate a child, is to educate oneself, to become conscious and master of oneself so that one never sets a bad example to one's child. For it is above all through example that education becomes effective. To speak good words and to give wise advice to a child has very little effect if one does not oneself give him an example of what one teaches. Sincerity, honesty, straightforwardness, courage, disinterestedness, unselfishness, patience, endurance, perseverance, peace, calm, self-control are all things that are taught infinitely better by example than by beautiful speeches. Parents have a high ideal and always act in accordance with it and you will see that little by little your child will reflect this ideal in himself and spontaneously manifest the qualities you would like to see expressed in his nature. Quite naturally a child has respect and admiration for his parents; unless they are quite unworthy, they will always appear to their child as demigods whom he will try to imitate as best he can.

CWM 12: 9-10

Example is the best teacher

Example is the most powerful instructor. Never demand from a child an effort of discipline that you do not make yourself. Calm, equanimity, order, method, absence of useless words, ought to

be constantly practised by the teacher if he wants to instil them into his pupils.

The teacher should always be punctual and come to the class a few minutes before it begins, always properly dressed. And above all, so that his students should never lie, he must never lie himself; so that his students should never lose their tempers, he should never lose his temper with them; and to have the right to say to them, “Rough play often ends in tears”, he should never raise his hand against any of them.

These are elementary and preliminary things which ought to be practised in all schools without exception.

CWM 12: 193

Human authority is a symbolic thing

You see, individual, human authority, like the authority of a father of the family, of a teacher, of the head of a state, is a symbolic thing. They have no real authority but authority is given to them to enable them to fulfil a role in social life as it now is, that is to say, a social life founded upon falsehood and not at all on truth, for truth means unity and society is founded on division. There are people who work out their role, their function, their symbol more or less well — nobody is faultless, all is mixed in this world. But he who takes his role seriously, tries to fill it as honestly as possible, may receive inspirations which enable him to play his part a little more truly than an ordinary man. If the teacher who gives marks kept in mind that he was the representative of the divine truth, if he constantly took sufficient trouble to be in tune with the divine Will as much as this is possible for him, well, that could be very useful; for the ordinary teacher acts according to his personal preferences — what he does not like, what he likes, etc. — and he belongs to the general falsehood, but if at the time of giving marks, the teacher tries sincerely to put himself in harmony with a truth deeper than his small narrow

consciousness, he may serve as an intermediary of this truth and, as such, help his students to become conscious of this truth within themselves.

CWM 4: 92-93

Education is a sacerdocy (priesthood)

This is precisely one of the things that I wanted to tell you. Education is a sacerdocy, teaching is a sacerdocy, and to be at the head of a State is a sacerdocy. Then, if the person who fulfils this role aspires to fulfil it in the highest and the most true way, the general condition of the world can become much better. Unfortunately, most people never think about this at all, they fill their role somehow — not to speak of the innumerable people who work only to earn money, but in this case their activity is altogether rotten, naturally. That was my very first basis in forming the Ashram: that the work done here be an offering to the Divine.

Instead of letting oneself go in the stream of one's nature, of one's mood, one must constantly keep in mind this kind of feeling that one is a representative of the Supreme Knowledge, the Supreme Truth, the Supreme Law, and that one must apply it in the most honest, the most sincere way one can; then one makes great progress oneself and can make others also progress. And besides, one will be respected, there will be no more indiscipline in the class, for there is in every human being something that recognises and bows down before true greatness; even the worst criminals are capable of admiring a noble and disinterested act. Therefore when children feel in a teacher, in a school master, this deep aspiration to act according to the truth, they listen to you with an obedience which you would not get if one day you were in a good mood and the next day you were not, which is disastrous for everybody.

CWM 4: 93

The Mother

An Advice

The system prevailing in our universities is one which ignores the psychology of man, loads the mind laboriously with numerous little packets of information carefully tied with red tape, and, by the methods used in this loading process, damages or atrophies the faculties and instruments by which man assimilates, creates and grows in intellect, manhood and energy.

*

....there is too much of a tendency in this country to regard education as a mere episode, finished when once the degree is obtained. But the University cannot and does not pretend to complete a man's education; it merely gives some materials to his hand or points out certain paths he may tread, and it says to him,—“Here are the materials I have given into your hands, it is for you to make of them what you can;” or — “These are the paths I have equipped you to travel; it is yours to tread them to the end, and by your success in them justify me before the world.”

I would ask you therefore to remember these things in your future life, not to drop the effects of your College training as no longer necessary, but, to strive for eminence and greatness in your own lines, and by the brilliance of your names add lustre to the first nursing home of your capacities, to cherish its memory with affection as that which equipped your intellects, trained you into men, and strove to give you such social life as might fit you for the world. And finally I would ask you not to sever yourselves in after days from it, but if you are far, to welcome its alumni when you meet them with brotherly feelings and if you are near to keep up connection with it, not to regard the difference of age between yourselves and its future students but associate with them, be present at such occasions as this social gathering and evince by your acts your gratitude for all that it did for you in the past.

CWSA 1: 368, 355-56

Sri Aurobindo



*The effective manifestation
of Ishwara and Ishwari
in union.*

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SYMBOL OF THE
SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL
CENTRE OF EDUCATION (SAICE)**

One of the most recent forms under which Sri Aurobindo conceived of the development of his work was to establish at Pondicherry an International University Centre open to students from all over the world. ...

*

I am perfectly sure, I am quite confident, there is not the slightest doubt in my mind, that this University, which is being established here, will be the greatest seat of knowledge upon earth.

It may take fifty years, it may take a hundred years, and you may doubt about my being there; I may be there or not, but these children of mine will be there to carry out my work.

And those who collaborate in this divine work today will have the joy and pride of having participated in such an exceptional achievement.

CWM 12: 111-12

The Mother

PERSONALITY TRAITS OF A SUCCESSFUL TEACHER

1. Complete self-control not only to the extent of not showing any anger, but remaining absolutely quiet and undisturbed under all circumstances.

2. In the matter of self-confidence, must also have a sense of the relativity of his importance.

Above all, must have the knowledge that the teacher himself must always progress if he wants his students to progress, must not remain satisfied either with what he is or with what he knows.

3. Must not have any sense of essential superiority over his students nor preference or attachment whatsoever for one or another.

4. Must know that all are equal spiritually and instead of mere tolerance must have a global comprehension or understanding.

5. "The business of both parent and teacher is to enable and to help the child to educate himself, to develop his own intellectual, moral, aesthetic and practical capacities and to grow freely as an organic being, not to be kneaded and pressured into form like an inert plastic material." (Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle*)

CWM 12: 167

The Mother



Students' Prayer

Make of us the hero warriors we aspire to become. May we fight successfully the great battle of the future that is to be born, against the past that seeks to endure; so that the new things may manifest and we may be ready to receive them.

CWM 12:112

The Mother

A New Education for a new Consciousness

The real purpose and Aim

What is the real purpose, the aim of our Education Centre? Is it to teach Sri Aurobindo's works? And these only? And all or some of these? Or is it to prepare students to read Sri Aurobindo's works and Mother's? Is it to prepare them for the Ashram life or also for other 'outside' occupation? ...

It is not a question of preparing to read these works or other works. It is a question of pulling all those who are capable to do so, out of the general human routine of thought, feeling and action; it is to give all opportunities to those who are here to cast off from them the slavery to the human way of thinking and doing; it is to teach all those who want to listen that there is another and truer way of living, that Sri Aurobindo has taught us how to live and become a *true being* — and that the aim of the education here is to prepare the children and make them fit for *that life*.

For all the rest, the human ways of thinking and living, the world is vast and there is place out there for everybody.

It is not a number that we want — it is a selection; it is not brilliant students that we want, it is living souls.

CWM 12:117-18

The Ideal of Education

It had been proposed that education in our school and our university centre would be given in accordance with the ideals of Sri Aurobindo. But so far the education given here is the same as in other schools; one follows the same programme.

Yes, my child. And for years I have been fighting for it to be otherwise. When you — you children, here — when you are old enough

and ready to become teachers, then you will be entrusted with teaching the newcomers the right thing, in the right way. Actually, for the time being, it is much more a school of teachers than a school of students! What is wanted is that you prepare yourselves by learning what everybody knows — for there is an indispensable basis: it is not anything very much, it is not a very detailed or very deeply established basis, but still there is a basis of general human knowledge that's necessary — but once you have that basis and have at the same time benefited by the influence that is here, and when you have read and understood sufficiently well to be able to see from that angle — the angle of the true life — well, when you know all that, you will be the ones asked to teach the children from outside what you have learnt. That is part of the work.

It is true that apart from a few rare exceptions, the teaching is given on the most ordinary principles. I know it. But, for instance, in order that it be otherwise, the books which are used should be prepared here, with the extracts chosen here, even with the method of teaching worked out here.

CWM 12: 414-15

The disease called utilitarianism

Why are no diplomas and certificates given to the students of the Centre of Education?

For the last hundred years or so mankind has been suffering from a disease which seems to be spreading more and more and which has reached a climax in our times; it is what we may call “utilitarianism”. People and things, circumstances and activities seem to be viewed and appreciated exclusively from this angle. Nothing has any value unless it is useful. Certainly something that is useful is better than something that is not. But first we must agree on what we describe as useful — useful to whom, to what, for what?

For, more and more, the races who consider themselves civilised describe as useful whatever can attract, procure or

produce money. Everything is judged and evaluated from a monetary angle. That is what I call utilitarianism. And this disease is highly contagious, for even children are not immune to it.

At an age when they should be dreaming of beauty, greatness and perfection, dreams that may be too sublime for ordinary common sense, but which are nevertheless far superior to this dull good sense, children now dream of money and worry about how to earn it.

So when they think of their studies, they think above all about what can be useful to them, so that later on when they grow up they can earn a lot of money.

And the thing that becomes most important for them is to prepare themselves to pass examinations with success, for with diplomas, certificates and titles they will be able to find good positions and earn a lot of money.

For them study has no other purpose, no other interest.

CWM 12: 351

To learn for the sake of knowledge, to study in order to know the secrets of Nature and life, to educate oneself in order to grow in consciousness, to discipline oneself in order to become master of oneself, to overcome one's weaknesses, incapacities and ignorance, to prepare oneself to advance in life towards a goal that is nobler and vaster, more generous and more true... they hardly give it a thought and consider it all very utopian. The only thing that matters is to be practical, to prepare themselves and learn how to earn money.

Children who are infected with this disease are out of place at the Centre of Education of the Ashram. And it is to make this quite clear to them that we do not prepare them for any official examination or competition and do not give them any diplomas or titles which they can use in the outside world.

We want here only those who aspire for a higher and better life, who thirst for knowledge and perfection, who look forward eagerly to a future that will be more totally true.

There is plenty of room in the world for all the others. CWM 12:351-52

Education provides a framework

You think that you are sent to school, that you are made to do exercises, all this just for the pleasure of vexing you? Oh, no! It is because it's indispensable for you to have a frame in which you can learn how to form yourself. If you did your work of individualisation, of total formation, by yourself, all alone in a corner, nothing at all would be asked of you. But you don't do it, you wouldn't do it, there's not a single child who would do it, he wouldn't even know how to do it, where to begin. If a child were not taught how to live, he could not live, he wouldn't know how to do anything, anything. I don't want to speak about disgusting details, but even the most elementary things he would not do properly if he were not taught how to do them. Therefore, one must, step by step... That is to say, if everyone had to go through the whole experience needed for the formation of an individuality, he would be long dead before having begun to live! This is the contribution — accumulated through centuries — of those who have had the experience and tell you, “Well, if you want to go quickly, to know in a few years what has been learnt through centuries, do this!” Read, learn, study and then, in the material field, you will be taught to do this in this way, that in that way, this again in this way (*gestures*). Once you know a little, you can find your own method, if you have the genius for it! But first one must stand on one's own feet and know how to walk. It is very difficult to learn it all alone. It's like that for everyone. One must form oneself. Therefore, one needs education.

CWM 6: 261

The Mother

Aspiration of centuries has brought us here

What is there in us that has made us come here?

The answer is within. There is nothing outside. And if you go deep enough, you will find a very clear answer... (*silence*) and an interesting answer. If you go deep enough, into a sufficiently complete silence from all outer things, you will find within you that flame about which I often speak, and in this flame you will see *your destiny*. You will see the aspiration of centuries which has been concentrated gradually, to lead you through countless births to *the great day of realisation* — that preparation which has been made through thousands of years, and is reaching its culmination.

And as you will have gone very deep to find this, all your incapacities, all your weaknesses, everything in you that denies and does not understand, all that — you will feel that it is not yourself, it is just like a garment which serves in some way and which you have put on for the time being. But you will understand that in order to be truly capable of profiting fully by the opportunity to do what you wanted to do, what you have aspired to do for such a long time, you must gradually bring the light, the consciousness, the truth into all these obscure elements of the external garment, so that you may be able to understand integrally *why you are here!* And not only that you may understand it, but that you may be able to do it. For centuries this has been prepared in you, not in this... (*Mother pinches the skin of her forearm*) this is quite recent, isn't it?... but in your true self. And for *centuries* it has been awaiting *this opportunity*. And then you enter *immediately* into the marvellous. You see to what an extent it is extraordinary... that things which one has so long hoped for, things for which one has prayed so much, made so many efforts, suddenly a moment comes when *they are realised*.

It is the moment when great things are done. One must not miss the opportunity. CWM 6: 271-72

Power of the atmosphere

But precisely, I believe that someone who has grown up here from childhood and felt things quite subconsciously when very young, and who has in spite of everything... that leaves a trace, it cannot go without any effect; and when one sees children brought up here beside those who come from outside, there is truly a great difference (perhaps not outwardly in the mechanical part of training, but in the understanding, the intelligence, in the inner awakening), there is a considerable difference, and the new ones need some time to come up to the same level. It is something beyond books, don't you see? It is like the difference between living in a pure atmosphere, filling the lungs with pure air every time one breathes and living in an infected atmosphere and poisoning oneself every time one breathes. From the point of view of consciousness it is the same phenomenon, and it is essentially the most important thing. And it is this which completely escapes the superficial consciousness. You are plunged in a sea of consciousness full of light, aspiration, true understanding, essential purity, and whether you want it or not it enters. Even for those who are shut up in their outer consciousness, well, they cannot sleep in vain. There is an action here during sleep which is quite considerable, considerable. So that has an effect, it is visible. I have seen people who had come altogether from outside, who knew nothing (only they had spent their life taking interest in children), well, the impression of these people — visitors, people just passing by — they are all quite bewildered: "But you have children here as I have never seen elsewhere!" As for us, we are used to it, aren't we? They are spontaneously like that, quite naturally. But there is an awakening in the consciousness, there is a kind of inner response and a feeling of blossoming, of inner freedom which is not found elsewhere. Some of the children who come here are terribly well brought up — so polite, so well-bred, who answer you so... and one gets the impression of little

puppets, just half alive, who have been well polished, well brushed, well groomed outside, but within there is no response. Here, I cannot say that we give an example of unusual politeness (!), one is rather a little... a little what people call “ill-bred”. But in that too one is so alive! One feels a consciousness vibrating here. And that is the most important part of all. And of this one does not speak, for these are things one *does*, but does not talk about — an occasion like today’s must present itself for me to speak to you about it. Indeed, you have been here for so many years, and this is the first time I have had it.

CWM 5:415-17

The Mother

A child should never be scolded. I am accused of speaking ill of parents! But I have seen them at work, you see, and I know that ninety per cent of parents snub a child who comes spontaneously to confess a mistake: “You are very naughty. Go away, I am busy” — instead of listening to the child with patience and explaining to him where his fault lies, how he ought to have acted. And the child, who had come with good intentions, goes away quite hurt, with the feeling: “Why am I treated thus?” Then the child sees his parents are not perfect — which is obviously true of them today — he sees that they are wrong and says to himself: “Why does he scold me, he is like me!”

CWM 4: 28

The Mother

The New Way

Doing everything in a new spirit

Mother, if for instance in the long jump one makes an effort to jump a greater and greater distance, how does one do the divine work?

Eh? Excuse me, it is not for the pleasure of doing the long jump, it is to make your body more perfect in its functioning, and, therefore, a more suitable instrument for receiving the divine forces and manifesting them.

Why, everything, everything one does in this place must be done in this spirit, otherwise you do not even profit by the opportunity given to you, the circumstances given to you. I explained to you the other day, didn't I, that the Consciousness is here, penetrating all things and trying to manifest in all movements? But if you, on your side, tell yourself that the effort you are making, the progress you are making, you make in order to become more capable of receiving this Consciousness and of manifesting it, the work will naturally be much better and much quicker. And this seems to me even quite elementary, to tell you the truth; I am surprised that it could be otherwise! Because your presence in an Ashram organised as it is organised would have no meaning if it were not that! Of what use would it be? There are any number of universities, schools in the world which are very well organised!

But if you are here, it is for a *special reason*! It is because here there is a possibility of absorbing consciousness and progress which is not found elsewhere. And if you don't prepare yourselves to receive this, well, you will lose the chance that's given to you!

CWM 6:269

***One can be in psychological control of the children
only when one is in control of one's own nature.***

CWM 12:193

The Mother

The principle of maximum possible freedom

You said that because we are here and have everything, it seems very natural to us. Why doesn't effort also come naturally?

It is because the physical nature in ordinary men is, as Sri Aurobindo writes, rather tamasic. Naturally it does not make any effort. But the vital makes an effort. Only, it makes the effort usually for its own satisfaction. Yet it is quite capable of making an effort because that is in its nature. In fact, I can't say that you don't make any effort, you make a lot of effort for many things, when it pleases you or when you have understood that it is necessary for one reason or another. What you mean is to make a continuous effort for yoga. There are even people who have come here for yoga or at least thinking that they came for yoga and who don't make much effort, who take things easy, as they come. I don't think that the physical nature, left to itself, is spontaneously pushed into any effort. It needs a certain amount of activity, but it is very little. You see, the great thing here is that the principle of education is a principle of freedom, and to put it briefly, the whole life is organised on the maximum possible freedom in movement; that is, the rules, regulations, restrictions are reduced absolutely to the minimum. If you compare this with the way in which parents usually educate their children, with a constant "Don't do this", "You can't do that", "Do this", "Go and do that", and, you know, orders and rules, there is a considerable difference.

In schools and colleges everywhere there are infinitely more strict rules than what we have here. So, as one doesn't impose on you the absolute condition of making progress, you make it when it pleases you, you don't when it doesn't, and then you take things as easy as you can. There are some — I do not say this absolutely — there are some who try, but they try spontaneously. Of course from the spiritual point of view this is infinitely more valuable. The progress you will make because you feel within

yourself the need to make it, because it is an impulsion that pushes you forward spontaneously, and not because it is something imposed on you like a rule — this progress, from the spiritual point of view, is infinitely greater. All in you that tries to do things well, tries to do it spontaneously and sincerely; it is something that comes from within you, and not because you have been promised rewards if you do well and punishments if you do badly. Our system is not based on this.

It is possible that at a certain moment something comes along to give you the impression that your effort has been appreciated, but the effort was not made in view of that; that is, these promises are not made beforehand nor are they balanced by equivalent punishments. This is not the practice here. Usually things are such, arranged in such a way, that the satisfaction of having done well seems to be the best of rewards and one punishes oneself when one does badly, in the sense that one feels miserable and unhappy and ill at ease, and this is indeed the most concrete punishment one has. And so, all these movements, from the point of view of the inner spiritual growth, have an infinitely greater value than when they are the result of an outer rule.

CWM 6: 430-32

Freedom and Discipline

Mother, some say that our general inadequacy in studies comes from the fact that too much stress is laid on games, physical education. Is this true?

Who said that? People who don't like physical education? Stiff old teachers who can't do exercises any longer? These? — I am not asking for names!

Well, I don't think so.

You remember the first article Sri Aurobindo wrote in the *Bulletin*? He answers these people quite categorically.

I don't think it is that. I am quite sure it is not that, I believe, rather — and I put all the blame on myself — that you have been given a fantastic freedom, my children; oh! I don't think there is any other place in the world where children are so free. And, indeed, it is very difficult to know how to make use of a freedom like that.

However, it was worthwhile trying the experiment. You don't appreciate it because you don't know how it is when it is not like that; it seems quite natural to you. But it is very difficult to know how to organise one's own freedom oneself. Still, if you were to succeed in doing that, in giving yourself your own discipline — and for higher reasons, not in order to pass exams, to make a career, please your teachers, win many prizes, or all the ordinary reasons children have: in order not to be scolded, not to be punished, for all that; we leave out all those reasons — if you manage to impose a discipline upon yourself — each one his own, there is no need to follow someone else's — a discipline simply because you want to progress and draw the best out of yourself, then... Oh! you will be far superior to those who follow the ordinary school disciplines. That is what I wanted to try. Mind you, I don't say I have failed; I still have great hope that you will know how to profit by this unique opportunity. But all the same, there is something you must find out; it is the *necessity* of an inner discipline. Without discipline you won't be able to get anywhere, without discipline you can't even live the normal life of a normal man. But instead of having the conventional discipline of ordinary societies or ordinary institutions, I would have liked and I still want you to have the discipline you set yourselves, for the love of perfection, your own perfection, the perfection of your being.

But without that... Note that if one didn't discipline the body, one would not even be able to stand on two legs, one would continue like a child on all fours. You could do nothing. You are obliged to discipline yourself; you could not live in society, you

could not live at all, except all alone in the forest; and even then, I don't quite know. It is absolutely indispensable, I have told you this I don't know how often. And because I have a very marked aversion for conventional disciplines, social and others, it does not mean that you must abstain from all discipline. I would like everyone to find his own, in the sincerity of his inner aspiration and the will to realise himself.

And so, the aim of all those who know, whether they are teachers, instructors or any others, the very purpose of those who know, is to inform you, to help you. When you are in a situation which seems difficult to you, you put your problem and, from their personal experience, they can tell you, "No, it is like this or it is like that, and you must do this, you must try that." So, instead of forcing you to absorb theories, principles and so-called laws, and a more or less abstract knowledge, they would be there to give you information about things, from the most material to the most spiritual, each one within his own province and according to his capacity.

CWM 8:183-85

Freedom and Mastery

Mother. You have said that the student must be given full freedom. Now, some interpret this as meaning that there should be no fixed classes, for the student should be left free to do what he likes, to come to the class or not as he likes, etc. So in this case, there should not be fixed hours for each class. And in this case the organisation becomes very complicated — how to arrange the classes?

Quite impossible! But when did I say that the student must be left free to come or not?...

Excuse me, you must not confuse things. I have said and I repeat that if a student feels quite alien to a subject, for

example, if a student feels he has an ability for literature and poetry and has a distaste or at least an indifference for mathematics, if he tells me, "I prefer not to follow the mathematics course", I can't tell him, "No, it is absolutely necessary to go to it." But if a student has decided to follow a class, it is an absolutely *elementary* discipline that he follows it, goes to it regularly and behaves himself properly there; otherwise he is *altogether unworthy* of going to school. I have never encouraged anyone to roam about during class-hours and to come one day and be absent the next, never, for, to begin with, if he can't submit to this quite elementary discipline, he will never acquire the least control over himself, he will always be the slave of all his impulses and all his fancies.

If you don't want to study a certain branch of knowledge, that is all right, no one can compel you to do it; but if you decide to do something — anything in life, if you decide to do a thing — you must do it *honestly*, with discipline, regularity and method. And without whims. I have never approved of anyone being the plaything of his own impulses and fancies, never, and you will never be able to have that from me, for then one is no longer a human being, one is an animal. So, here is one of the questions quite settled, without any discussion.

CWM 8: 356-57

Should one punish a child?

Punish? What do you mean by punish? If a child is noisy in class and prevents the others from working, you must tell him to behave himself; and if he continues, you can send him out of the class. That is not a punishment, it is a natural consequence of his actions. But to punish! To punish! You have no right to punish.

CWM 12:378

The Mother

The right to remain in Ignorance

People have a lamentable habit of copying what has been done before and what is done by others. Long ago I told you this. That argument: “This must be done, because this is what is done everywhere!” I reply, “That is why perhaps it should not be done! For if all others do it, what is the use of doing it here also?”

But without your intervention, how can we do anything?

But why do you ask me that? You should first change your system of education in accordance with the principles of the Supermind. At least you should try. You must not ask, you must do it. If you always move in the same rut, you can continue indefinitely in that rut. You must try to get out of it.

Indeed, I am constantly discussing this subject. I think it was just today or perhaps yesterday, I was pleading for the right of everyone to remain in ignorance if it pleases him — I am not speaking of ignorance from the spiritual point of view, the world of Ignorance in which we live, I am not speaking of that. I am speaking of ignorance according to the classical ideas of education. Well, I say that if there are people who don't want to learn and don't like to learn, they have the right not to learn.

The only thing it is our duty to tell them is this, “Now, you are of an age when your brain is in course of preparation. It is being formed. Each new thing you study makes one more little convolution in your brain. The more you study, the more you think, the more you reflect, the more you work, the more complex and complete does your brain become in its tiny convolutions. And as you are young, it is best done at this time. That is why it is common human practice to choose youth as the period of learning, for it is infinitely easier.” And it is obvious that until the child becomes at least a little conscious of itself, it must be subjected to a certain rule, for it has not yet the capacity of choosing for itself.

CWM 8:178-79

Teaching the children to make choices

That age is very variable; it depends on people, depends on each individual. But still, it is understood that in the seven year period between the age of seven and fourteen, one begins to reach the age of reason. If one is helped, one can become a reasoning being between seven and fourteen.

Before seven there are geniuses — there are always geniuses, everywhere — but as a general rule the child is not conscious of itself and doesn't know why or how to do things. That is the time to cultivate its attention, teach it to concentrate on what it does, give it a small basis sufficient for it not to be entirely like a little animal, but to belong to the human race through an elementary intellectual development.

After that, there is a period of seven years during which it must be taught to choose — to choose what it wants to be. If it chooses to have a rich, complex, well-developed brain, powerful in its functioning, well, it must be taught to work; for it is by work, by reflection, study, analysis and so on that the brain is formed. At fourteen you are ready — or ought to be ready — to know what you want to be.

And so I say: if at about that age some children declare categorically, “Intellectual growth does not interest me at all, I don't want to learn, I want to remain ignorant in the ordinary way of ignorance”, I don't see by what right one could impose studies on them nor why it should be necessary to standardise them.

CWM 8: 179-80

The old opposition

In history, the Spirit is there; in science, the Spirit is there — the Truth is everywhere. And what is needed is not to teach it in a false way, but to teach it in a true way. ...

There is no “spiritual life”! It is still the old idea, still the old idea of the sage, the sannyasin, the... who represents spiritual life,

while all the others represent ordinary life — and it is not true, it is not true, it is not true at all.

If they still need an opposition between two things — for the poor mind doesn't work if you don't give it an opposition — if they need an opposition, let them take the opposition between Truth and Falsehood, it is a little better; I don't say it is perfect, but it is a little better. So, in all things, Falsehood and Truth are mixed everywhere: in the so-called “spiritual life”, in sannyasins, in swamis, in those who think they represent the life divine on earth, all that — there also, there is a mixture of Falsehood and Truth.

It would be better not to make any division.

For the children, precisely because they are children, it would be best to instil in them the will to conquer the future, the will to always look ahead and to want to move on as swiftly as they can towards... what will be—but they should not drag with them the burden, the millstone of the whole oppressive weight of the past. It is only when we are very high in consciousness and knowledge that it is good to look behind to find the points where this future begins to show itself. When we can look at the whole picture, when we have a very global vision, it becomes interesting to know that what will be realised later on has already been announced beforehand, in the same way that Sri Aurobindo said that the divine life will manifest on earth, because it is *already* involved in the depths of Matter; from this standpoint it is interesting to look back or to look down below — not to know what happened, or to know what men have known: that is quite useless.

The children should be told: There are wonderful things to be manifested, prepare yourself to receive them. Then if they want something a little more concrete and easier to understand, you can tell them: Sri Aurobindo came to announce these things; when you are able to read him, you will understand. So this awakens the interest, the desire to learn.

CWM 12:401-03

Attitude towards study

Mother, this question arises because in our studies at school we feel at times a great distaste and ask ourselves, "What's the use of all this?" So with what attitude should we study?

I have always said that studies have the same effect on the brain as gymnastics on the muscles. For example, mental gymnastics are very necessary to make one's mental activity supple, to strengthen and enrich it and give it a subtlety of understanding it would not have if you didn't do these gymnastics. Of late — indeed for quite a long time already — I have noticed, for instance, that if I am unfortunate enough to read to you something with philosophical terms or to speak to you from a slightly philosophical point of view, you cannot follow. And that is simply because you have not done any philosophical gymnastics. It is not that you are not intelligent, it is not that you don't have the capacity to understand: it is because you haven't done the proper gymnastics. I could tell you the same thing in another way: you have not learnt the language. But the same words are used, only with a slightly different relation between them, with different turns of phrase, with a different mental attitude to things. Well, this difference of attitude you cannot have unless you have done the corresponding gymnastics. And it is very easy for you to understand this example, for you all know very well that you could never do your athletic exercises if you were not trained. Even if you have special abilities, even if you are gifted, if you do not practise and train yourself, you cannot do them. Consider all your agility exercises, if you were asked to do them on the first day, you could not, it would be quite impossible, and you know it very well. If someone were to tell you spontaneously, "Ah! now do this" — say, a certain kind of jump, what used to be called the flying somersault — you would say, "This person is truly unreasonable, it is impossible!" Well, this is the same thing; if I take certain books and read

them to you, you cannot follow because you have completely neglected philosophical mental gymnastics. It is exactly the same thing if someone who has not done mathematics is asked to follow a mathematical reasoning — he won't be able to.... And so, this means that if you want to express fully, totally, the deeper reality of your being, you will express it in a much richer, more integral, more varied, more productive way if all the parts of your being are fully developed like this by appropriate gymnastics.

CWM 8: 65

A few drops of truth

Never make a mistake.

Never lose your temper.

Always understand.

And to know and see clearly why there has been this movement, why there has been this impulse, what is the inner constitution of the child, what is the thing to be strengthened and brought forward — this is the only thing to do; and to leave them, to leave them free to blossom; simply to give them the opportunity to see many things, to touch many things, to do as many things as possible. It is great fun. And above all, not to try to impose on them what you think you know.

Never scold them. Always understand, and if the child is ready, explain; if he is not ready for an explanation — if you are ready yourself — replace the false vibration by a true one. But this... this is to demand from the teachers a perfection which they rarely have.

But it would be very interesting to make a programme for the teachers and the true programme of study, from the very bottom — which is so plastic and which receives impressions so deeply. If they were given a few drops of truth when they are very young, they would blossom quite naturally as the being grows. It would be beautiful work.

CWM 12: 405

The value of sports

Mother, are sports competitions essential to our progress?

From the point of view of moral education they are rather essential, for if one can take part in them in the right spirit, it is a very good opportunity for mastering one's ego. If one does it without trying to overcome one's weaknesses and lower movements, one obviously doesn't know how to profit by them, and it does no good; but if one has the will to play in the right spirit, without any movement of a lower kind, without jealousy or ambition, keeping an attitude which could be called "fair play", that is, doing one's best and not caring about the result; if one can put in the utmost effort without being upset because one has not met with success or things have not turned out in one's favour, then it is very useful. One can come out of all these competitions with a greater self-control and a detachment from results which are a great help to the formation of an exceptional character. Naturally, if you do it in the ordinary way and with all the ordinary reactions and ugly movements, it doesn't help anything at all; but that holds good in no matter what one does; whether in the field of sports or the intellectual field, anywhere, if one acts in the ordinary way, well, one wastes one's time. But if when playing or taking part in tournaments and competitions, you keep the right spirit, it is a very good education, for it compels you to make a special effort and to exceed your ordinary limits a little. It is certainly an opportunity to make conscious many of your movements which otherwise would always remain unconscious.

But naturally, you must not forget that this must be an opportunity and a means for progress. If you just let yourselves go and play in an altogether ordinary manner, you are wasting your time; but it is the same for everything, not only for this: for studies and for anything at all. Everything *always* depends on the way in which things are done, not so much on what one does but on the spirit in which one does it.

If you were all yogis and did everything you do with your utmost effort and to your utmost possibilities, as well as you can do it and always with the idea of doing it better still, then, obviously, there would be no need of competitions, prizes, rewards; but, as Sri Aurobindo writes, little children cannot be expected to be yogis, and during the period of preparation a stimulus is necessary for the most material consciousness to make an effort for progress.... And this period of childhood may last for many years!

The ideal would be exactly what I have written in the last *Bulletin*, I don't know if you have read it, but I have written something like this:

Have no ambition,
above all pretend nothing,
but be at every moment
the utmost that you can be.

That is the ideal state in the integral life — whatever one does. And if one realises that, well, one is certainly very far on the path of perfection.... But it is obvious that a certain inner maturity is needed to do this in all sincerity. You may set this as a programme for yourselves.

CWM 9:97-98

Use of reason

Well, it is to avoid this that you are told, when your brain is in course of being formed, "Instead of letting it be shaped by such habits and qualities, try to give it a little exactitude, precision, capacity of concentration, of choosing, deciding, putting things in order, try to use your reason."

Of course, it is well understood that reason is not the supreme capacity of man and must be surpassed, but it is quite obvious that if you don't have it, you will live an altogether incoherent life, you won't even know how to behave rationally. The least thing will

upset you completely and you won't even know why, and still less how to remedy it. While someone who has established within himself a state of active, clear reasoning, can face attacks of all kinds, emotional attacks or any trials whatever; for life is entirely made up of these things — unpleasantness, vexations — which are small but proportionate to the one who feels them, and so naturally felt by him as very big because they are proportionate to him. Well, reason can stand back a little, look at all that, smile and say, "Oh! no, one must not make a fuss over such a small thing."

If you do not have reason, you will be like a cork on a stormy sea. I don't know if the cork suffers from its condition, but it does not seem to me a very happy one.

There, then.

Now, after having said all this — and it's not just once I have told you this but several times I think, and I am ready to tell it to you again as many times as you like — after having said this, I believe in leaving you entirely free to choose whether you want to be the cork on the stormy sea or whether you want to have a clear, precise perception and a sufficient knowledge of things to be able to walk to — well, simply to where you want to go.

For there is a clarity that's indispensable in order to be able even to follow the path one has chosen.

I am not at all keen on your becoming scholars, far from it! For then one falls into the other extreme: one fills one's head with so many things that there is no longer any room for the higher light; but there is a minimum that is indispensable for not... well, for not being the cork.

CWM 8:182-83

The Mother

It should be known and we should not hesitate to say openly that the purpose of our school is to discover and encourage those in whom the need for progress has become conscious enough to orient their life.

CWM 17:306

The Mother

Preparing the course

At school one has to finish a course in a year. One must hasten a little at times. Before one has been able to understand a question well, one has to go to the next chapter.

There, my child, I fully agree with you, it is not quite right. But we shall try to change all that; because after all I don't see why one has to finish a book in a year. It is quite arbitrary. One should not leave a chapter until it has been fully grasped; only then take up the next one and so on. And if a chapter is finished, it is finished: and if it is not finished it is not finished.

The truth is that the teacher, instead of basing his course on a text-book, should take the trouble of preparing the course himself. He must know enough and take sufficient pains to prepare his course from day to day, and in this way he will close a subject only when — I do not say when everyone has understood, for that is impossible — but at least when those whom he considers the interesting elements of his class have understood. Then the next subject is taken up. And if that continues, if a particular type of subject extends over two years instead of one or for a year and a half instead of two, it matters little; because it is his own production, his own course written by him and he writes according to the need of his class. That is my conception of teaching. Now, it has indeed its difficulties. But that is the true way of working, because by taking a book and following it, particularly a book which may very well be not at all suited to the students.... I do not say that a particular course could suit all, it is impossible to satisfy everybody. But there are those who want to make an effort; it is these that you must consider. Those who are lazy, somnolent or indolent — well, you must leave them to their laziness or somnolence or indolence. If they want to sleep all their lives, let them sleep until something shakes them up sufficiently and awakens them! But what is interesting in a class is the section that wishes to learn, those who really want to learn and it is for

them that the class should be taken. Don't you see, the present method of education is a kind of levelling; everyone must be at the same stage. So those who have their heads higher up have them cut off, and those who are too small are pushed up from below. But that doesn't do any good. One must be concerned only with those who come up, the others will take what they can. And indeed I do not see any necessity for everybody knowing the same thing — for that is not normal. But those who want to know and who can know, those who must work, these should be given all possible means for working, must be pushed up as much as possible, must always be given new food. They are the hungry ones, they must be fed.... Ah! If I had the time I would take a class. That would interest me much, to show how it must be done. Only one cannot be everywhere at the same time!

CWM 5:105-06

Tests an obsolete way

I find tests an obsolete and ineffective way of knowing if the students are intelligent, willing and attentive.

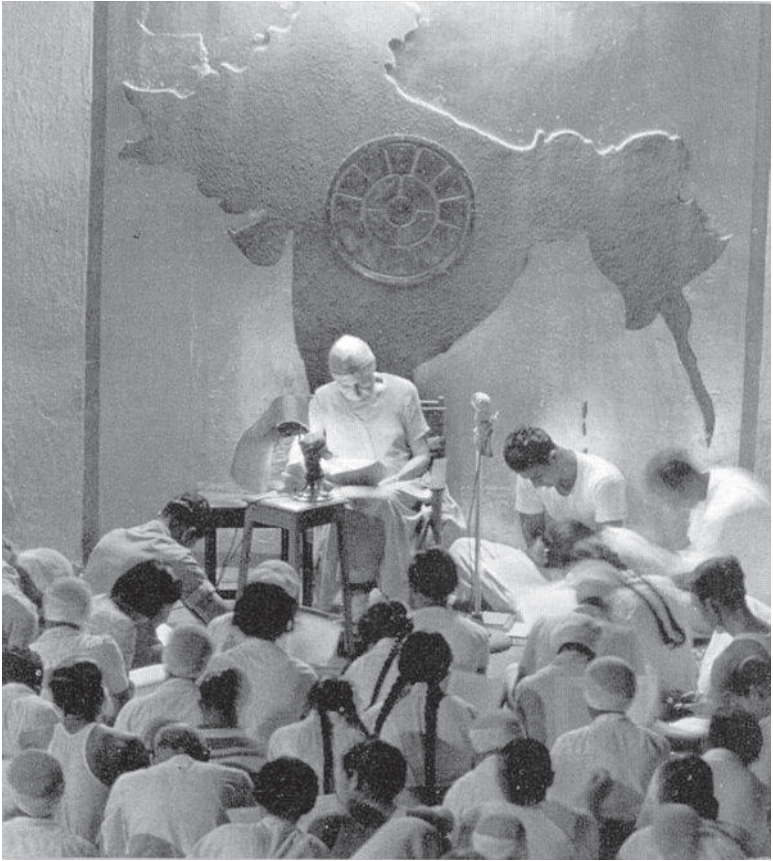
A silly, mechanical mind can very well answer a test if the memory is good and these are certainly not the qualities required for a man of the future.

It is by tolerance for the old habits that I consented that those who want tests can have them. But I hope that in future this concession will not be necessary.

To know if a student is good needs, if the tests are abolished, a little more inner contact and psychological knowledge for the teacher. But our teachers are expected to do Yoga, so this ought not to be difficult for them.

CWM 12:201

The Mother



It is the Supreme Lord who has ineluctably decreed the place you occupy in the universal concert, but whatever be this place, you have equally the same right as all others to ascend the supreme summits right to the supramental realisation.

What you are in the truth of your being is decreed in an irrevocable way, and nothing nor anyone can stop you from being it; but the path you take to get there is left to your own free choice.

CWM 12: 349

The Mother

A Soul-based Education

A quality to be cultivated

There is another quality which must be cultivated in a child from a very young age: that is the feeling of uneasiness, of a moral disbalance which it feels when it has done certain things, not because it has been told not to do them, not because it fears punishment, but spontaneously. For example, a child who hurts its comrade through mischief, if it is in its normal, natural state, will experience uneasiness, a grief deep in its being, because what it has done is contrary to its inner truth.

For in spite of all teachings, in spite of all that thought can think, there is something in the depths which has a feeling of a perfection, a greatness, a truth, and is painfully contradicted by all the movements opposing this truth. If a child has not been spoiled by its milieu, by deplorable examples around it, that is, if it is in the normal state, spontaneously, without its being told anything, it will feel an uneasiness when it has done something against the truth of its being. And it is exactly upon this that later its effort for progress must be founded.

CWM 4: 24

The one true guide

There is only one true guide, that is the inner guide, who does not pass through the mental consciousness.

Naturally, if a child gets a disastrous education, it will try ever harder to extinguish within itself this little true thing, and sometimes it succeeds so well that it loses all contact with it, and also the power of distinguishing between good and evil. That is why I insist upon this, and I say that from their infancy children must be taught that there is an inner reality — within themselves, within the earth, within the universe — and that they, the earth and the universe exist only as a function of this truth, and that if it did not exist the child would not last, even the short time that it does,

and that everything would dissolve even as it comes into being. And because this is the real basis of the universe, naturally it is this which will triumph; and all that opposes this cannot endure as long as this does, because it is That, the eternal thing which is at the base of the universe.

It is not a question, of course, of giving a child philosophical explanations, but he could very well be given the feeling of this kind of inner comfort, of satisfaction, and sometimes, of an intense joy when he obeys this little very silent thing within him which will prevent him from doing what is contrary to it. It is on an experience of this kind that teaching may be based. The child must be given the impression that nothing can endure if he does not have within himself this true satisfaction which alone is permanent.

CWM 4: 25

Teaching the children to know themselves

Essentially, the *only thing* you should do assiduously is to teach them to know themselves and choose their own destiny, the path they will follow; to teach them to look at themselves, understand themselves *and* to will what they want to be. That is infinitely more important than teaching them what happened on earth in former times, or even how the earth is built, or even... indeed, all sorts of things which are quite a necessary grounding if you want to live the ordinary life in the world, for if you don't know them, anyone will immediately put you down intellectually: "Oh, he is an idiot, he knows nothing."

But still, at any age, if you are studious and have the will to do it, you can also take up books and work; you don't need to go to school for that. There are enough books in the world to teach you things. There are even many more books than necessary. You can exhaust all subjects simply by going there to Medhananda's, to the Library. You will have enough to fill you up to here! (*Gesture*)

But what is very important is to know what you want. And for this a minimum of freedom is necessary. You must not be under a compulsion or an obligation. You must be able to do things wholeheartedly. If you are lazy, well, you will know what it means to be lazy.... You know, in life idlers are obliged to work ten times more than others, for what they do they do badly, so they are obliged to do it again. But these are things one must learn by experience. They can't be instilled into you.

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Learning to control the mind

The mind, if not controlled, is something wavering and imprecise. If one doesn't have the habit of concentrating it upon something, it goes on wandering all the time. It goes on without a stop anywhere and wanders into a *world* of vagueness. And then, when one wants to fix one's attention, it hurts! There is a little effort there, like this: "Oh! how tiring it is, it hurts!" So one does not do it. And one lives in a kind of cloud. And your head is like a cloud; it's like that, most brains are like clouds: there is no precision, no exactitude, no clarity, it is hazy — vague and hazy. You have impressions rather than a knowledge of things. You live in an approximation, and you can keep within you all sorts of contradictory ideas made up mostly of impressions, sensations, feelings, emotions — all sorts of things like that which have very little to do with thought and... which are just vague ramblings.

But if you want to succeed in having a precise, concrete, clear, definite thought on a certain subject, you must make an effort, gather yourself together, hold yourself firm, concentrate. And the first time you do it, it literally hurts, it is tiring! But if you don't make a habit of it, all your life you will be living in a state of irresolution. And when it comes to practical things, when you are faced with — for, in spite of everything, one is always faced with — a number of problems to solve, of a very practical kind, well, instead of being able to take up the elements of the problem, to put them

all face to face, look at the question from every side, and rising above and seeing the solution, instead of that you will be tossed about in the swirls of something grey and uncertain, and it will be like so many spiders running around in your head — but you won't succeed in catching the thing.

I am speaking of the simplest of problems, you know; I am not speaking of deciding the fate of the world or humanity, or even of a country — nothing of the kind. I am speaking of the problems of your daily life, of every day. They become something quite woolly.

CWM 8:181-82

Becoming conscious of the inner truth

Can a child become conscious of this inner truth like an adult?

For a child this is very clear, for it is a perception without any complications of word or thought — there is that which puts him at ease and that which makes him uneasy (it is not necessarily joy or sorrow which come only when the thing is very intense). And all this is much clearer in the child than in an adult, for the latter has always a mind which works and clouds his perception of the truth.

To give a child theories is absolutely useless, for as soon as his mind awakes he will find a thousand reasons for contradicting your theories, and he will be right.

This little true thing in the child is the divine Presence in the psychic — it is also there in plants and animals. In plants it is not conscious, in animals it begins to be conscious, and in children it is very conscious. I have known children who were much more conscious of their psychic being at the age of five than at fourteen, and at fourteen than at twenty-five; and above all, from the moment they go to school where they undergo that kind of intensive mental training which draws their attention to the intellectual part of their being, they lose almost always and almost completely this contact with their psychic being.

If only you were an experienced observer, if you could

tell what goes on in a person, simply by looking into his eyes!... It is said the eyes are the mirror of the soul; that is a popular way of speaking but if the eyes do not express to you the psychic, it is because it is very far behind, veiled by many things. Look carefully, then, into the eyes of little children, and you will see a kind of light — some describe it as candid — but so true, so true, which looks at the world with wonder. Well, this sense of wonder, it is the wonder of the psychic which sees the truth but does not understand much about the world, for it is too far from it. Children have this but as they learn more, become more intelligent, more educated, this is effaced, and you see all sorts of things in their eyes: thoughts, desires, passions, wickedness — but this kind of little flame, so pure, is no longer there. And you may be sure it is the mind that has got in there, and the psychic has gone very far behind.

Even a child who does not have a sufficiently developed brain to understand, if you simply pass on to him a vibration of protection or affection or solicitude or consolation, you will see that he responds. But if you take a boy of fourteen, for example, who is at school, who has ordinary parents and has been ill-treated, his mind is very much in the forefront; there is something hard in him, the psychic being has gone behind.

CWM 4:26-27

The Mother

Mother, would you please define in a few words what you mean essentially by “free progress”?

A progress guided by the soul and not subjected to habits, conventions or preconceived ideas.

*

School is just a preparation to make the students capable of thinking, studying, progressing and becoming intelligent if they can — all that must be done during the *entire life* and not only in school.

CWM 12: 171, 177 **The Mother**

The School of Everyday Life

The life of every day, of every moment, is the best school of all, varied, complex, full of unexpected experiences, problems to be solved, clear and striking examples and obvious consequences. It is so easy to arouse healthy curiosity in children, if you answer with intelligence and clarity the numerous questions they ask. An interesting reply to one readily brings others in its train and so the attentive child learns without effort much more than he usually does in the classroom. By a choice made with care and insight, you should also teach him to enjoy good reading-matter which is both instructive and attractive. Do not be afraid of anything that awakens and pleases his imagination; imagination develops the creative mental faculty and through it study becomes living and the mind develops in joy.

In order to increase the suppleness and comprehensive-ness of his mind, one should see not only that he studies many varied topics, but above all that a single subject is approached in various ways, so that the child understands in a practical manner that there are many ways of facing the same intellectual problem, of considering it and solving it. This will remove all rigidity from his brain and at the same time it will make his thinking richer and more supple and prepare it for a more complex and comprehensive synthesis. In this way also the child will be imbued with the sense of the extreme relativity of mental learning and, little by little, an aspiration for a truer source of knowledge will awaken in him.

CWM 12: 26-27

The Mother



To love to learn is the most precious gift that one can make to a child, to learn always and everywhere.

*

In any case, the finest present one can give to a child would be to teach him to know himself and to master himself.

CWM 12:25,166

The Mother

Sutras on Education

I am not for treating all the children in the same way, it makes a kind of uniform level, advantageous for those that are backward, but detrimental to those who can rise above the common height.

Those who want to work and learn must be encouraged but the energy of those who dislike studies must be turned to another outlet.

CWM 17:306

To speak good words and to give wise advice to a child has very little effect if one does not oneself give him an example of what one teaches. Sincerity, honesty, straightforwardness, courage, disinterestedness, unselfishness, patience, endurance, perseverance, peace, calm, self-control are all things that are taught infinitely better by example than by beautiful speeches.

CWM 12:10

Two things need to be done. Children must be taught:

- a) not to tell a lie, whatever the consequences;
- b) to control violence, rage, anger.

If these two things can be done, they can be led towards superhumanity.

There is an idea that if one breaks conventions, restrictions, one is free from the limitations of ordinary humanity. But this is wrong.

Those two things must be achieved to be able to be what may be called “superman”: not to tell lies and to control oneself.

A complete devotion to the Divine is the last condition, but these are the first two things to be achieved.

CWM 12:155

The children must be educated in an atmosphere of love and gentleness.

No violence, never.

No scolding, never.

Always a gentle kindness and the teacher must be the *living example* of the virtues the child must acquire.

The children must be *happy* to go to school, *happy* to learn, and the teacher must be their best friend who gives them the example of the qualities they must acquire.

CWM 12: 194

It is an invaluable possession for every living being to have learnt to know himself and to master himself. To know oneself means to know the motives of one's actions and reactions, the why and the how of all that happens in oneself. To master oneself means to do what one has decided to do, to do nothing but that, not to listen to or follow impulses, desires or fancies.

To give a moral law to a child is evidently not an ideal thing; but it is very difficult to do without it. The child can be taught, as he grows up, the relativity of all moral and social laws so that he may find in himself a higher and truer law. But here one must proceed with circumspection and insist on the difficulty of discovering that true law. The majority of those who reject human laws and proclaim their liberty and their decision to "live their own life" do so only in obedience to the most ordinary vital movements which they disguise and try to justify, if not to their own eyes, at least to the eyes of others. They give a kick to morality, simply because it is a hindrance to the satisfaction of their instincts.

No one has a right to sit in judgment over moral and social laws, unless he has taken his seat above them; one cannot abandon them, unless one replaces them by something superior, which is not so easy.

CWM 12:166

In principle, Mother, that is what we are thinking of — next year, to make all the children do Sanskrit, plus their mother tongue.

Yes. Not Sanskrit from the point of view of scholarship, but Sanskrit, a Sanskrit — how to put it? — that opens the door to all the languages of India. I think that is indispensable. The ideal would be, in a few years, to have a rejuvenated Sanskrit as the representative language of India, that is, a Sanskrit spoken in such a way that — Sanskrit is behind all the languages of India and it should be that. ...

So I would like to have a simple Sanskrit taught here, as simple as possible, but not “simplified”— simple by going back to its origin... all these sounds, the sounds that are the roots of the words which were formed afterwards.

CWM 12: 414-15

The Mother

The freedom of which I speak is the freedom to follow the soul’s will and not that of mental and vital whims and fancies.

The freedom of which I speak is an austere truth which tends to surmount all the weaknesses and desires of the lower, ignorant being.

The freedom of which I speak is the freedom to consecrate oneself entirely and without reserve to one’s highest, noblest and most divine aspiration.

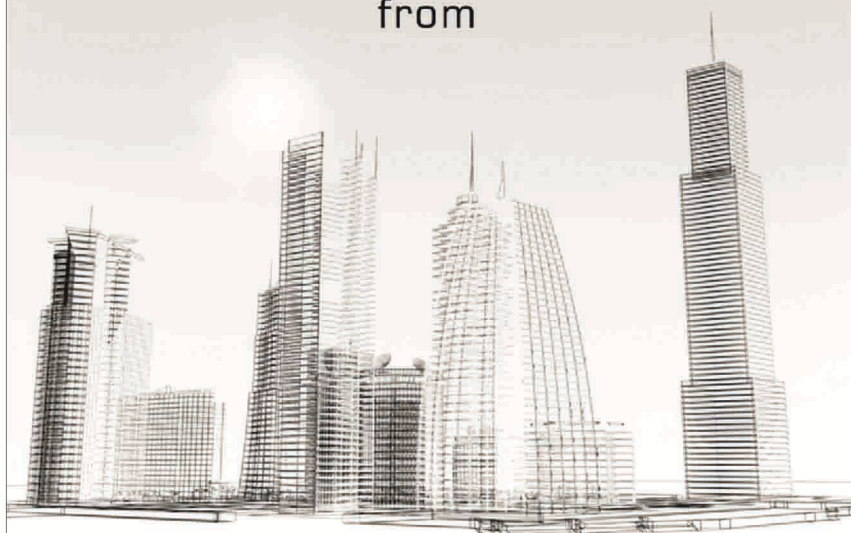
Who amongst you follows sincerely that path? It is easy to judge, but it is more difficult to understand and still much more difficult to realise.

CWM 12:391

The Mother



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