

# The Sunlit Path

## True and Living Education

Sri Aurobindo

***That alone will be a true and living education which helps to bring out to full advantage, makes ready for the full purpose and scope of human life all that is in the individual man, and which at the same time helps him to enter into his right relation with the life, mind and soul of the people to which he belongs and with that great total life, mind and soul of humanity of which he himself is a unit and his people or nation a living, a separate and yet inseparable member.***

**It is by considering the whole question in the light of this large and entire principle that we can best arrive at a clear idea of what we would have our education to be and what we shall strive to accomplish by a national education. ( A Preface on National Education, CWSA Vol. 1, p 425)**

\*\*\*\*\*

**If the growth of consciousness  
were considered as the principal goal of life,  
many difficulties would find their solution...**

## **The Mother**

(CWM Vol.12, p 123)

\*\*\*\*\*

## **A land of children dancing in the rain**

**Azim H. Premji**

One often hears of the high prevalence of child labour in our country. Of the many reports I have read, perhaps the most disturbing was a report on the condition of children employed by zari factories in Delhi, Mumbai and other parts of India. It grieves me to imagine children exposed to such inhumanity in an evolved society like ours.

**Robbing children of their childhood is a criminal act, and our society must weed this malaise out from the root.**

But where does the root lie? Before you attempt an answer, let me give you an anecdote from the other end of the social spectrum.

A colleague in Wipro has a child studying in standard nine of a reputed school in Bangalore. This child wakes up 5 a.m. And studies for an hour before going to school. She returns from school at 4 p.m. And rushes for her IIT entrance exam coaching class. At 6 p.m., she has tuitions for 2 hours. Post dinner, she spends an hour or more on homework. I asked her when she gets time to play. She replied that she does not play. She gets half – hour of free time each day, which she spends watching her favourite serial on television. She also added that board exams and entrance exams are very important, and that you only get one chance.

*Let me ask you: is the condition of this child different from that of the child in the zari factory? When I look at children, I wonder whether they have time to play with friends, to meet interesting people, to explore the world, and to follow their curiosity. When the first monsoon showers begin, I would think that the streets would be full of children rushing headlong into the*

*rain, dancing and playing. However, I think today, the rains fall on empty streets.*

**This, my friends, is the new Indian reality in our villages, in our slums, and in our metropolitan high-rises.**

Whatever the reasons – poverty, societal aspiration, apathetic individuals and organisations, or just the burden of circumstances – the reality is that our children are straitjacketed, thus stifling their natural growth.

**The final indicator of a country's independence is the way its children live. Are children free from the malaise of poverty and hunger? Are they free from the burden of parental aspiration? Are they free from norms of social conditioning? Are we ensuring the curiosity of our children continues to burn and is not stamped out? Are they free to explore the world, to realize their unique potential, and thereby, help discover the true potential of the society itself?**

Gandhiji said that the greatest lessons in life are learnt from children, not from learned men. A child will fearlessly try before giving up. As adults, fearing failure, we give up even before we try. A child is inherently curious about the world, about relationships, about wanting to understand how things work. As adults, our blinkered and conditioned self prevents



us from truly exploring without prejudice. For a child, what she does is meaningful in its own right. As an adult, we usually link every action to an external reward of money or recognition.

**I did not learn how to be a father from manuals. Whatever little I learnt about being a parent, I learnt by observing my children and letting them teach me. Similarly, I think our teachers could grow enormously by learning from their students how to be a good teacher. We will then refrain from pushing our knowledge down their young minds, and begin the democratic process of being joint learners as we discover and understand our world. I believe a powerful force for empowerment is to have'm motivated teachers who are learners first, teachers second. Only then will we stop trying to mould children into our "adult" likeness. Only then will we let them blossom, developing on the already mature qualities of their childhood.**

If India has to develop economically, socially, intellectually, and culturally, we must empower those most vulnerable to social diktat : our children. Let us resolve to give our children the freedom of childhood; let us change our schools from being textbook prisons to laboratories of exploration; let us change homes from being tuition centres to playgrounds of art and sport.

**India will be radiant when our children are free to dance in the rain.(7)**

\*\*\*\*\*

The  
days pass,  
the weeks pass,  
the months pass,  
the years pass and time fades into the past.  
And  
later on,  
when they have grown up,  
those who no longer have  
the immense advantage of being children  
regret the time that they have wasted and that they  
could have used to learn all the things which are needed  
to know how to live.

**The Mother**

## *National Education*

### *The Mother*

*In  
any  
country  
the best education  
that can be given to children  
consists in teaching them what the  
true nature of their country is and its own qualities,  
the mission their nation has to fulfil in the world and its  
true place in the terrestrial concert.*

*To that should be added  
a wide understanding of the role of other nations,  
but without the spirit of imitation and without ever losing sight of  
the genius of one's own country .*

( CWM Vol: 12, pages 252-3)



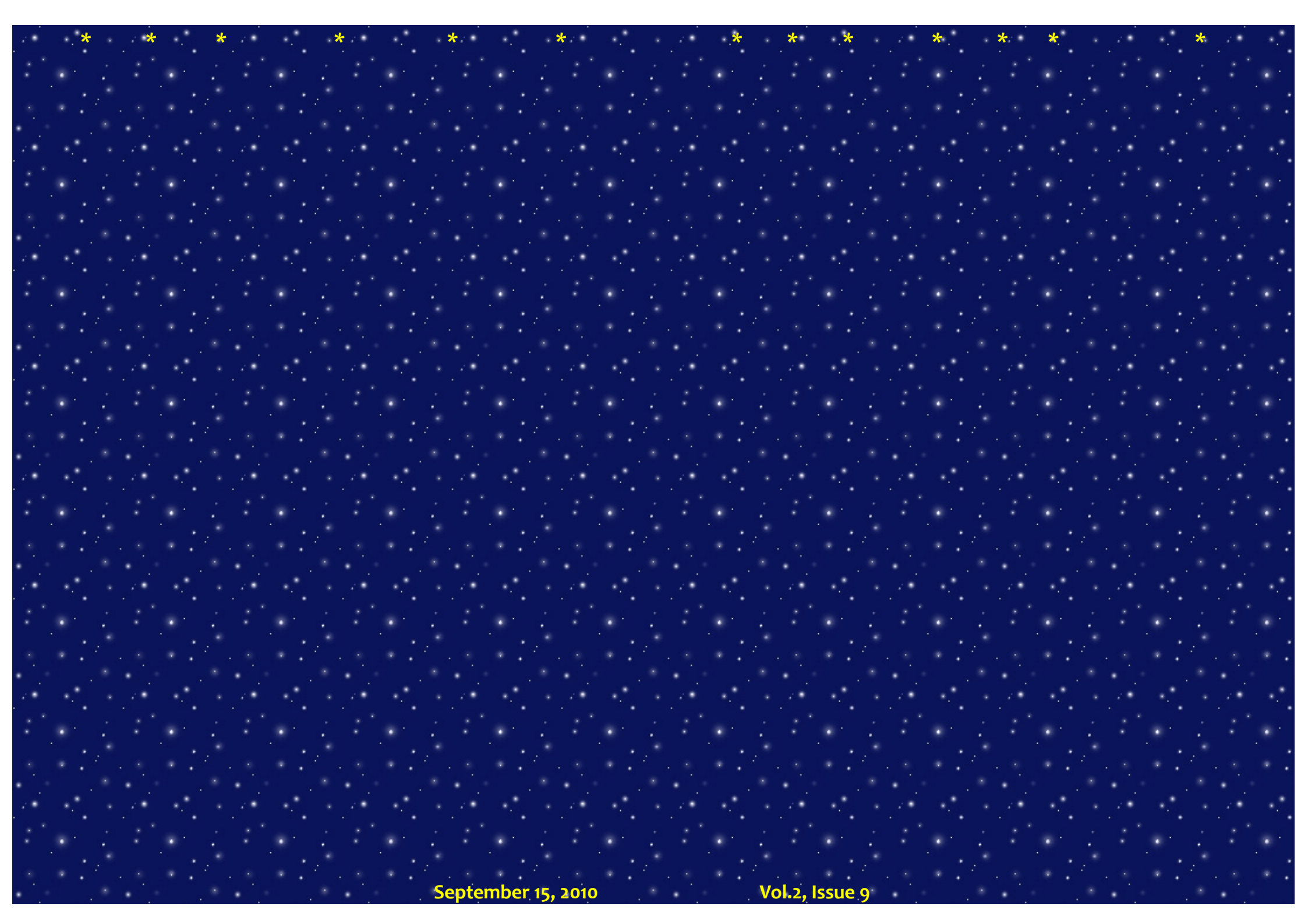
*To love to learn is the most precious gift that one can make to a child, to learn always and everywhere.*

*The Mother*

(CWM Vol. 12, page 166)

\*\*\*\*\*





\* \* \* \* \*